三国志

さんごくし

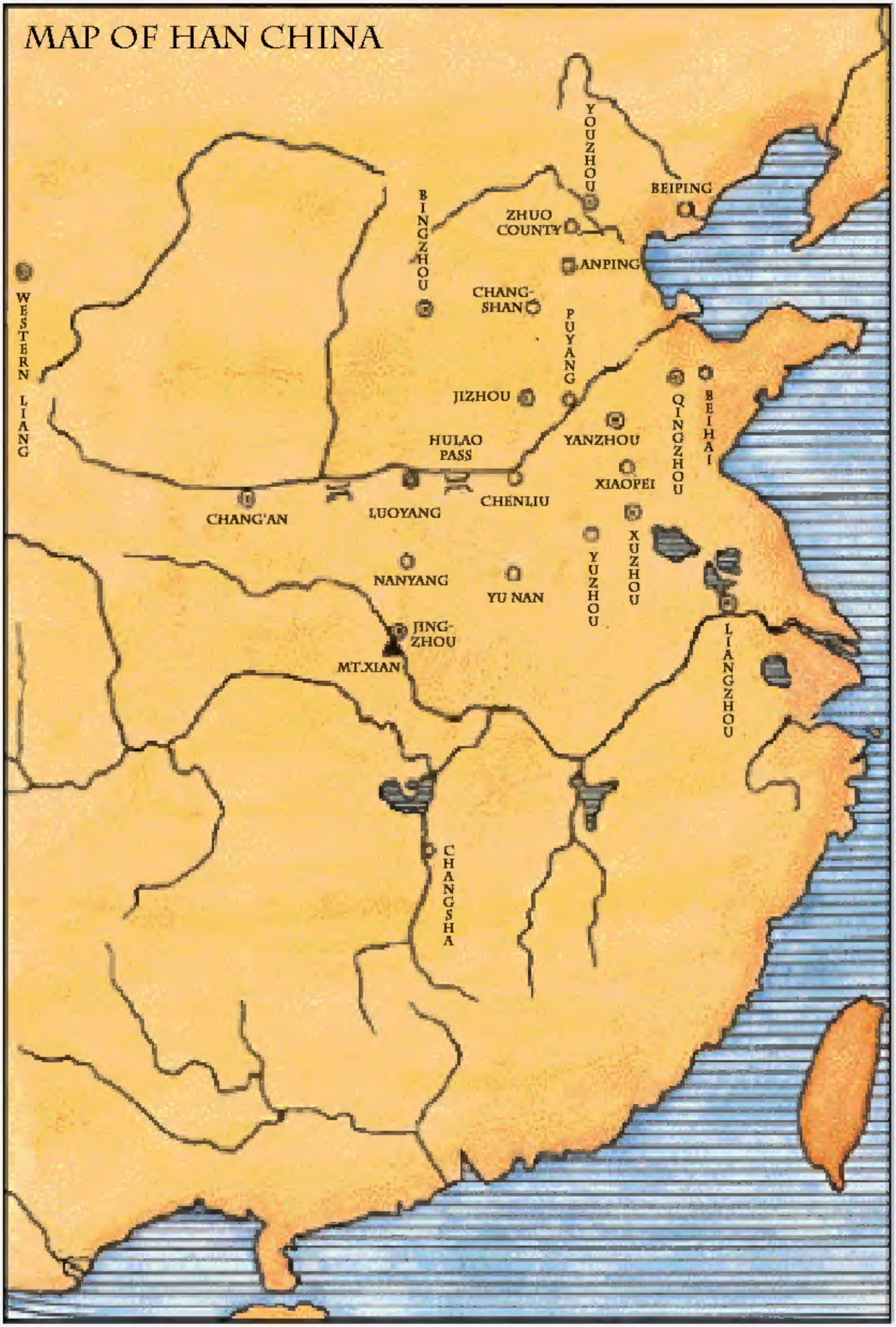
6

玉璽の行くえ

横山光輝

希望コミックス24

MAP OF HAN CHINA



SANGOKUSHI

6

THE IMPERIAL SEAL

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

ZHANG FEI, LIU BEI, GUAN YU

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志（さんごくし）

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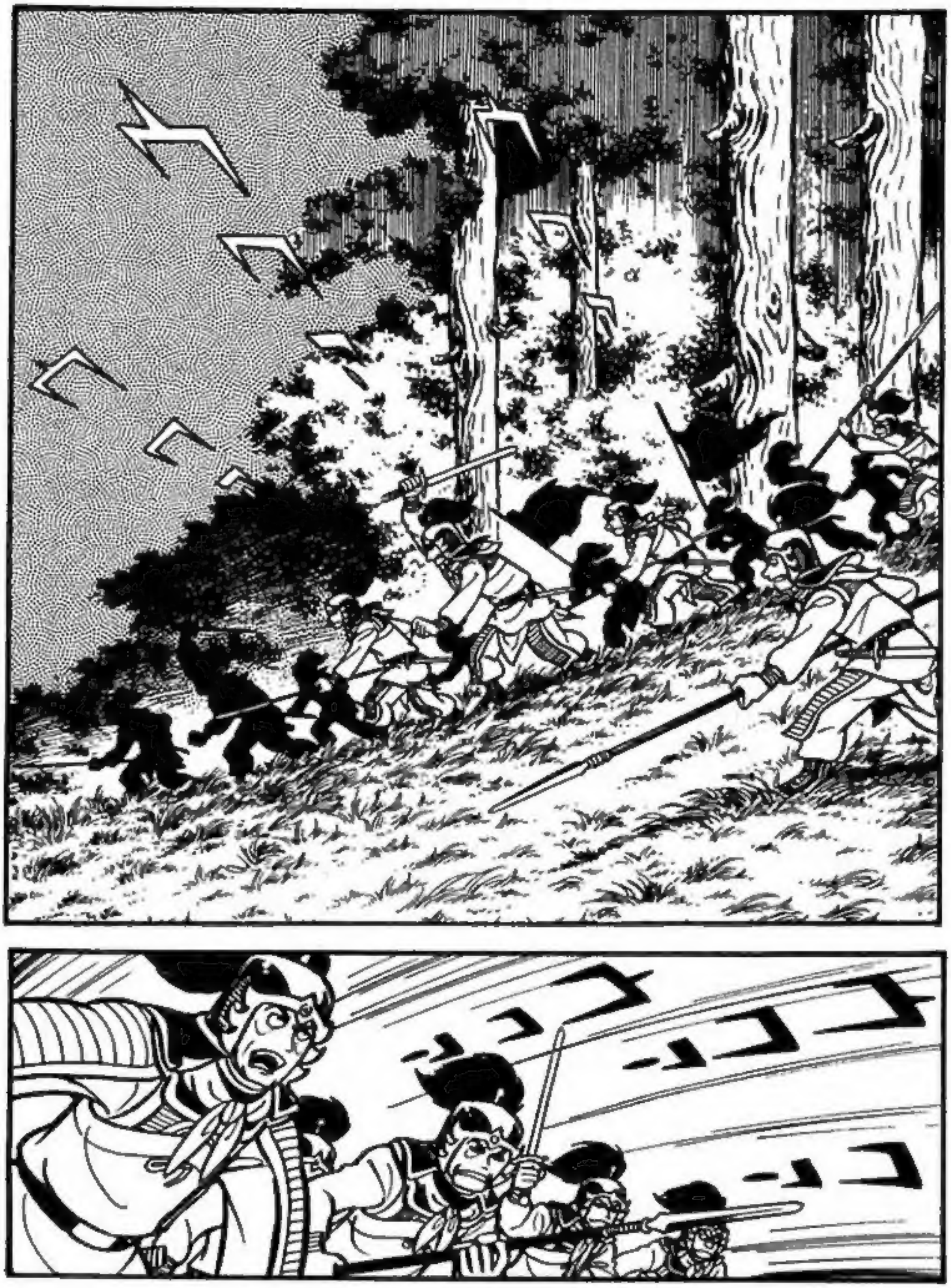
CAO CAO IN CRISIS



IS THIS THE END...!?

WHAT!?

MY LORD, IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO GIVE UP. PLEASE LEAVE THIS PLACE TO ME!

ALRIGHT MEN, CHARGE AND FIGHT BACK!

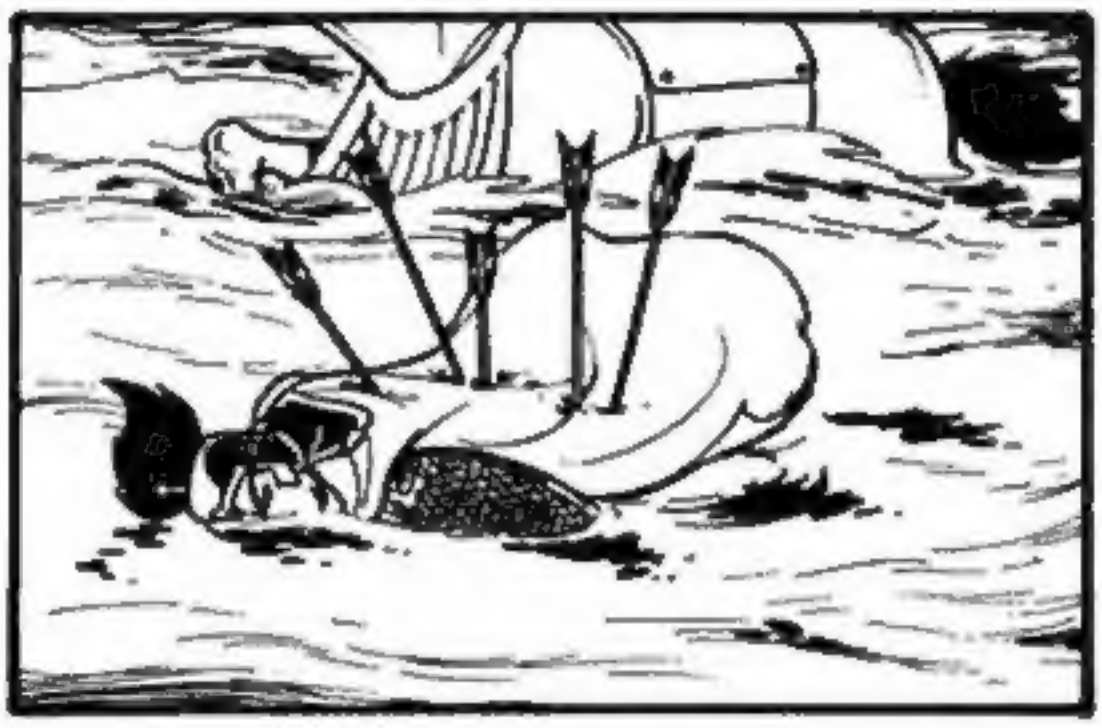
THE WORLD CAN DO WITHOUT ME, BUT NOT WITHOUT YOU SIR!

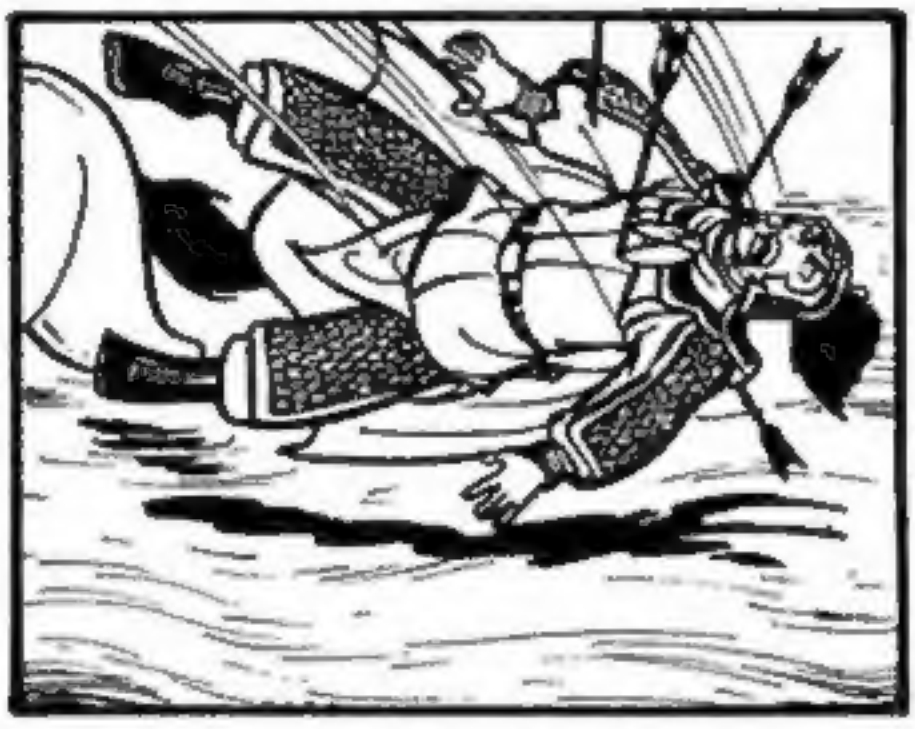
PLEASE DON'T FEEL ANY GUILT OR REMORSE AND ESCAPE SAFELY SIR!!!

THEN I WILL DO AS YOU SAY. I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU.

RETREAT!

I PRAY FOR YOUR SAFETY, SIR...





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SIR, THERE'S A STREAM OVER THERE!

GOOD EYE. LET US COOL OUR PARCHED THROATS.

?

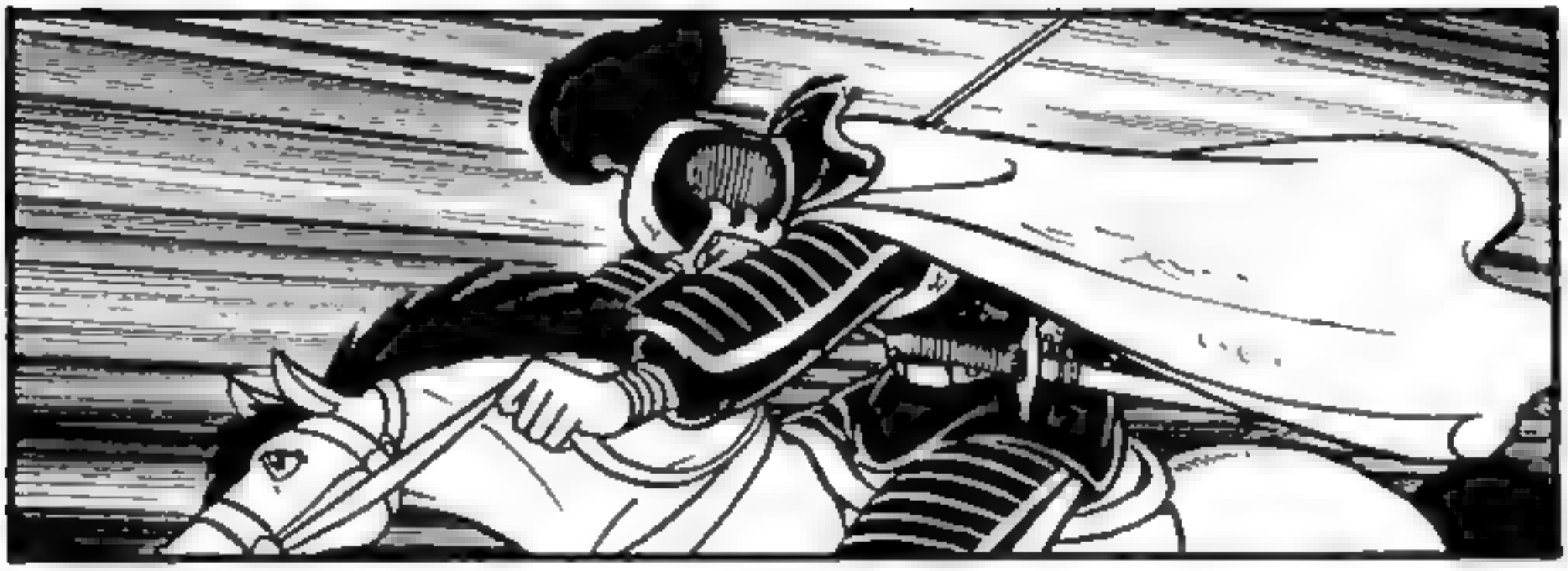
HMM!?

AGHH!

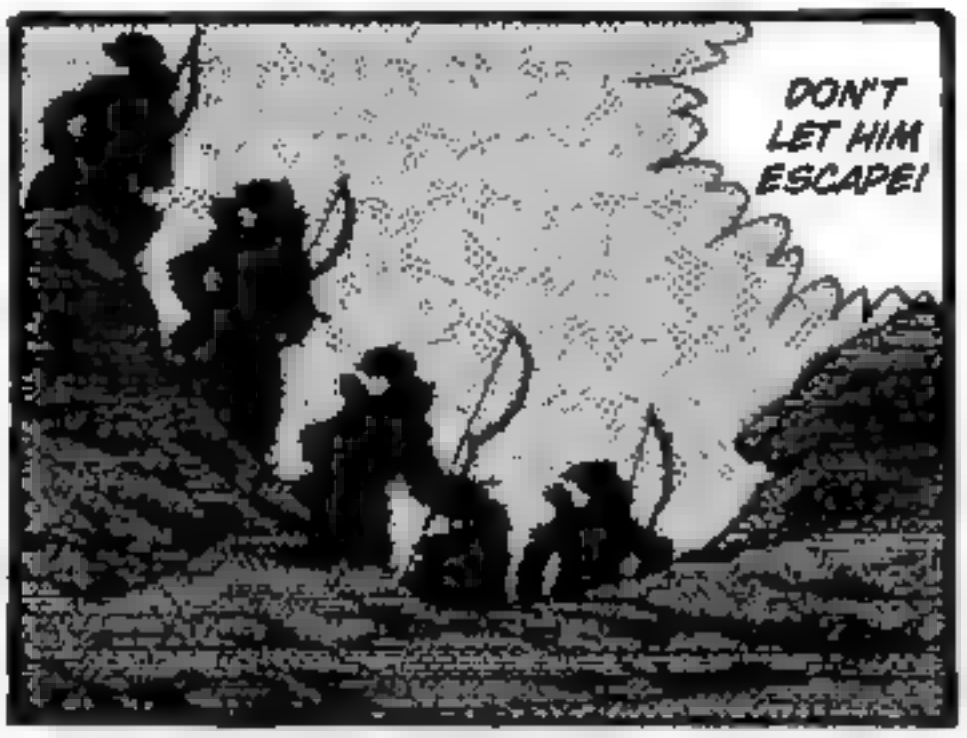
DAMN, THERE WERE ENEMIES HIDING HERE TOO!

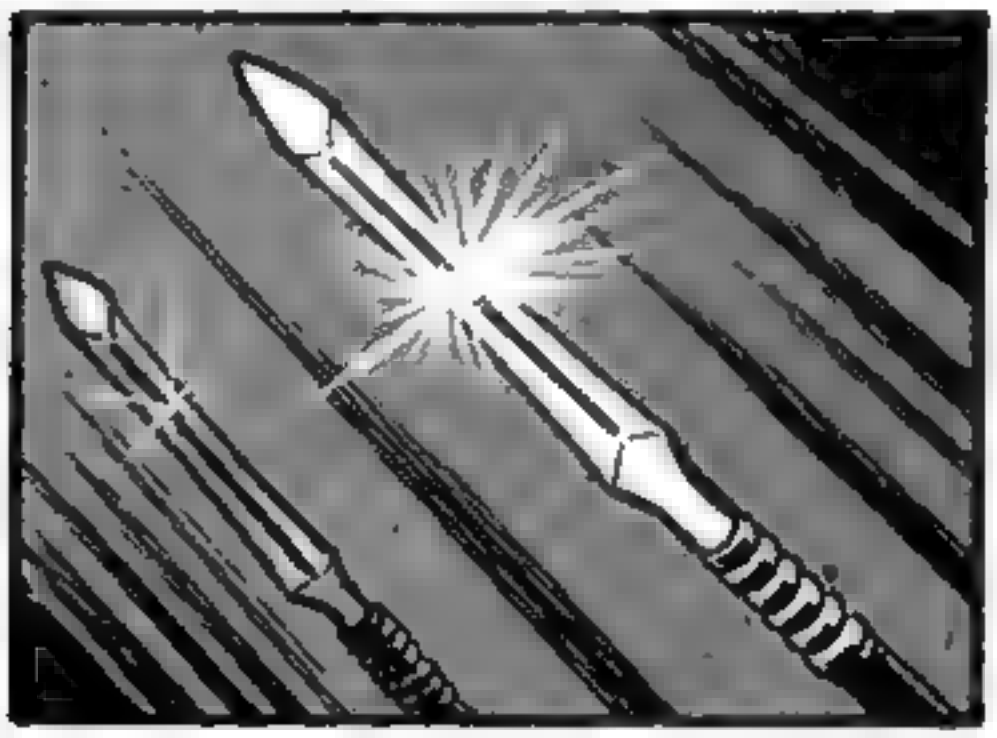
UGHH!

GUH!



THAT'S
CAO CAO!


DON'T
LET HIM
ESCAPE!



CATCH HIM!

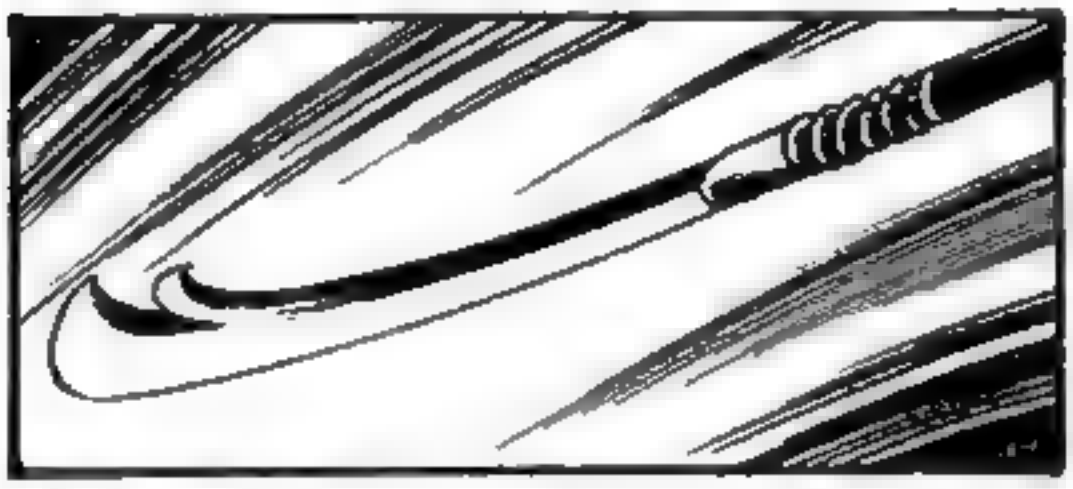
NGHHI

D...
DAMN THIS
SPEAR...

WE'VE FINALLY ARRESTED ONE OF THE HEADS OF THE REBELLION!

HM?

WHO'S THAT?



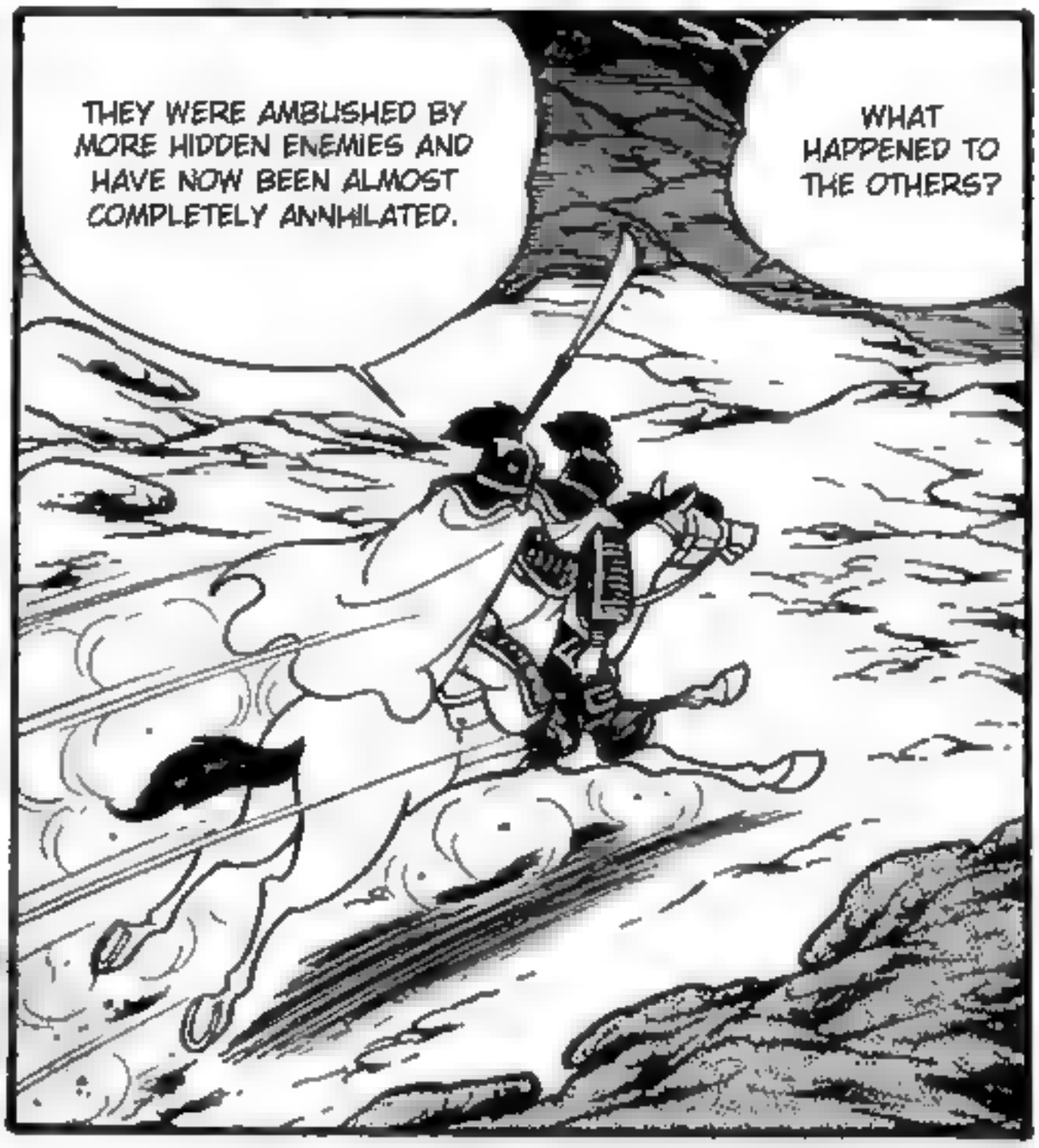
DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY!

ARREST CAO CAO AND WE'LL ALL BE GREATLY REWARDED!

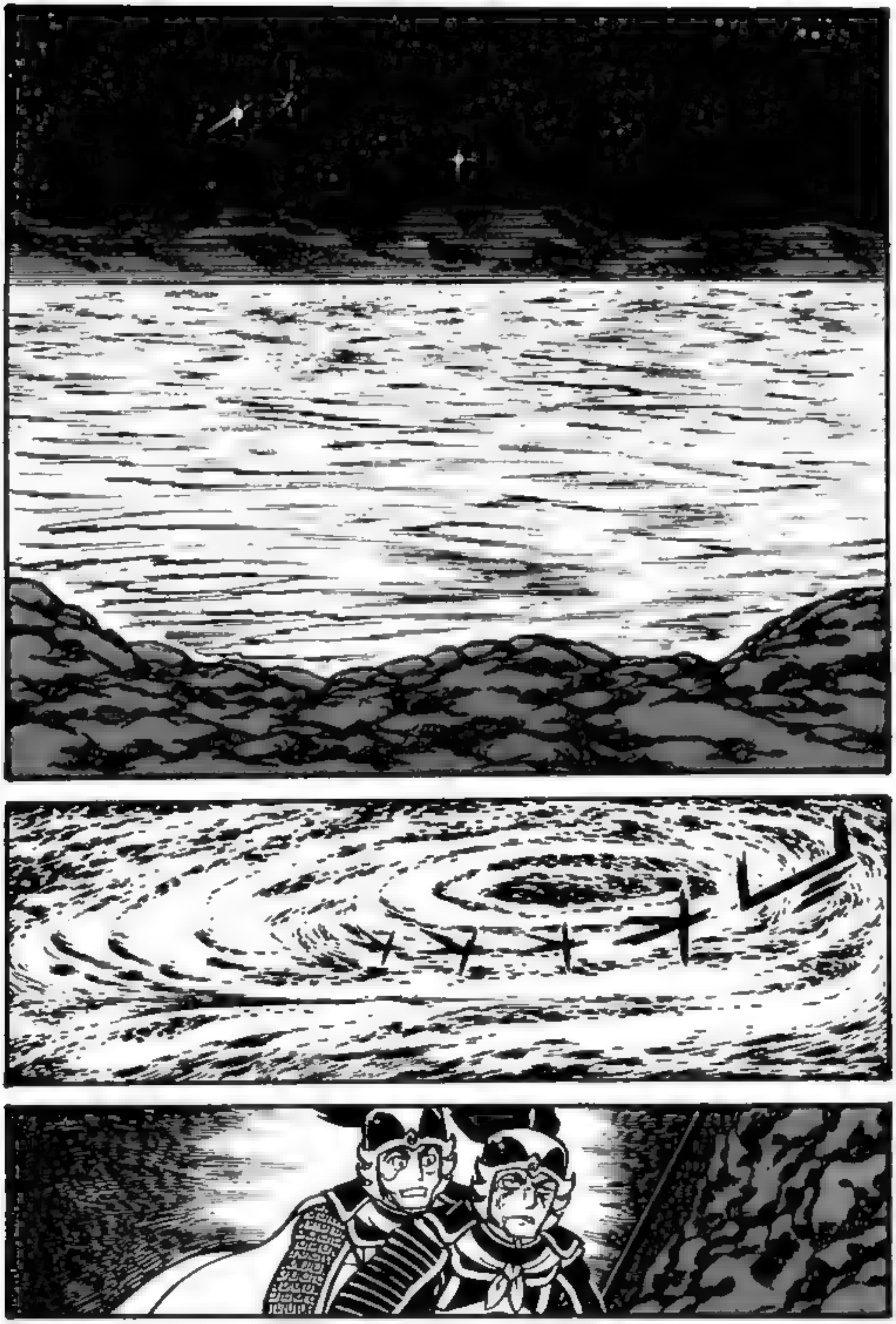
C-CAO HONG?

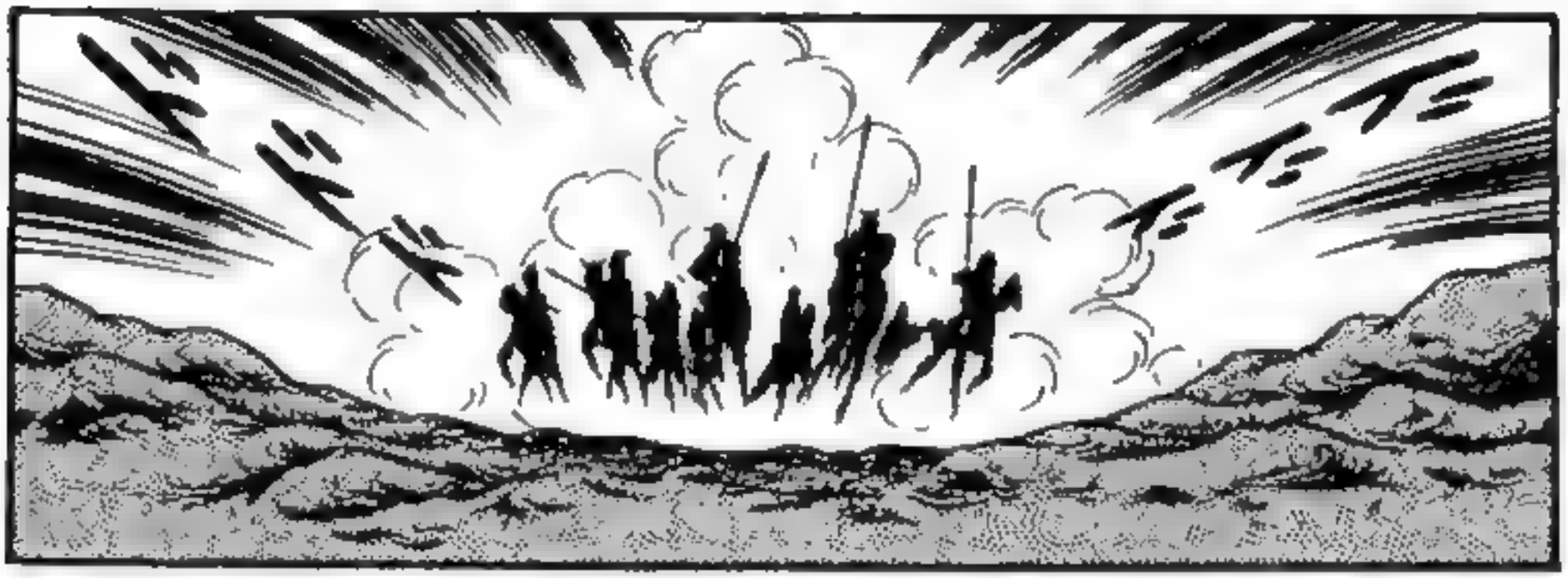
OPEN YOUR EYES. IT IS YOUR COUSIN, CAO HONG.

AH!


THEY WERE AMBUSHED BY MORE HIDDEN ENEMIES AND HAVE NOW BEEN ALMOST COMPLETELY ANNIHILATED.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHERS?

AHH!





CAO HONG, IT SEEMS THAT OUR FATES HAVE ALREADY BEEN SEALED.
A RIVER IN FRONT OF US AND ENEMIES IN BEHIND.

THE WORLD NEEDS A MAN LIKE YOU NOW MORE THAN EVER.
WHAT ARE YOU SPEAKING SO HOPE-LESSLY FOR?

LET ME OFF THIS HORSE. I SHALL RATHER TAKE MY OWN LIFE BEFORE THEY ARREST ME.

WE MUSTN'T LOSE HOPE UNTIL THE VERY, VERY END.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
PLEASE TAKE OFF YOUR ARMOUR, BROTHER.

IT IS HEAVEN'S WILL THAT BROTHER MUST SURVIVE IF JUST A DAY OR EVEN A HOUR LONGER.

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? WE'LL SWIM ACROSS THE RIVER.

DO NOT WORRY, I'LL CARRY YOU ACROSS THE RIVER.

BUT I CAN'T SWIM WITH THESE INJURIES.

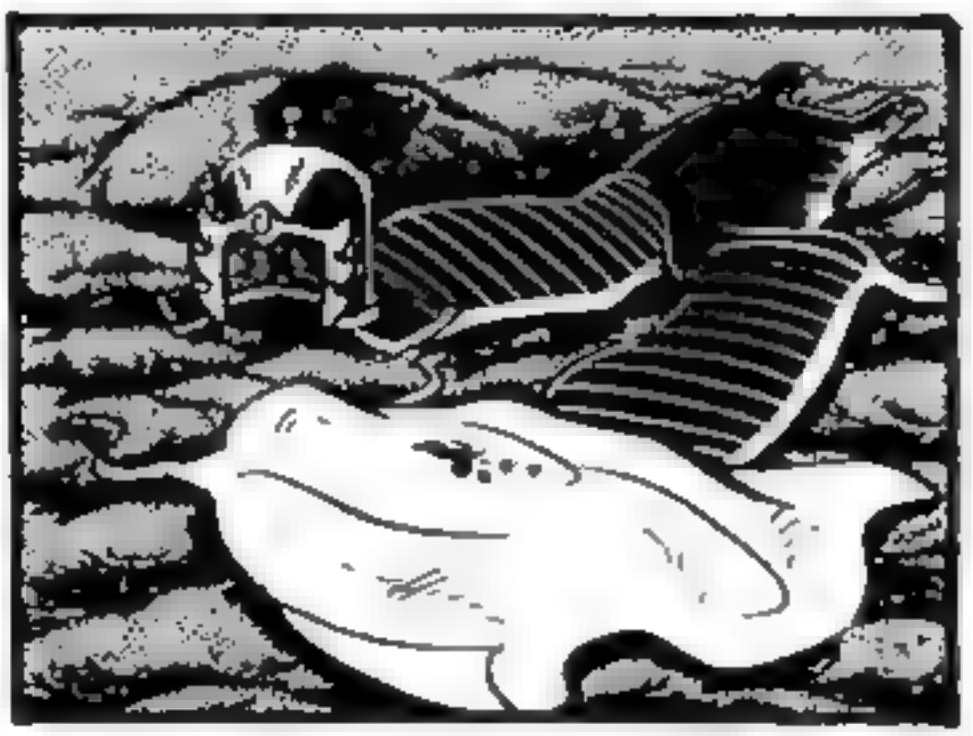
NOW HURRY, BROTHER.

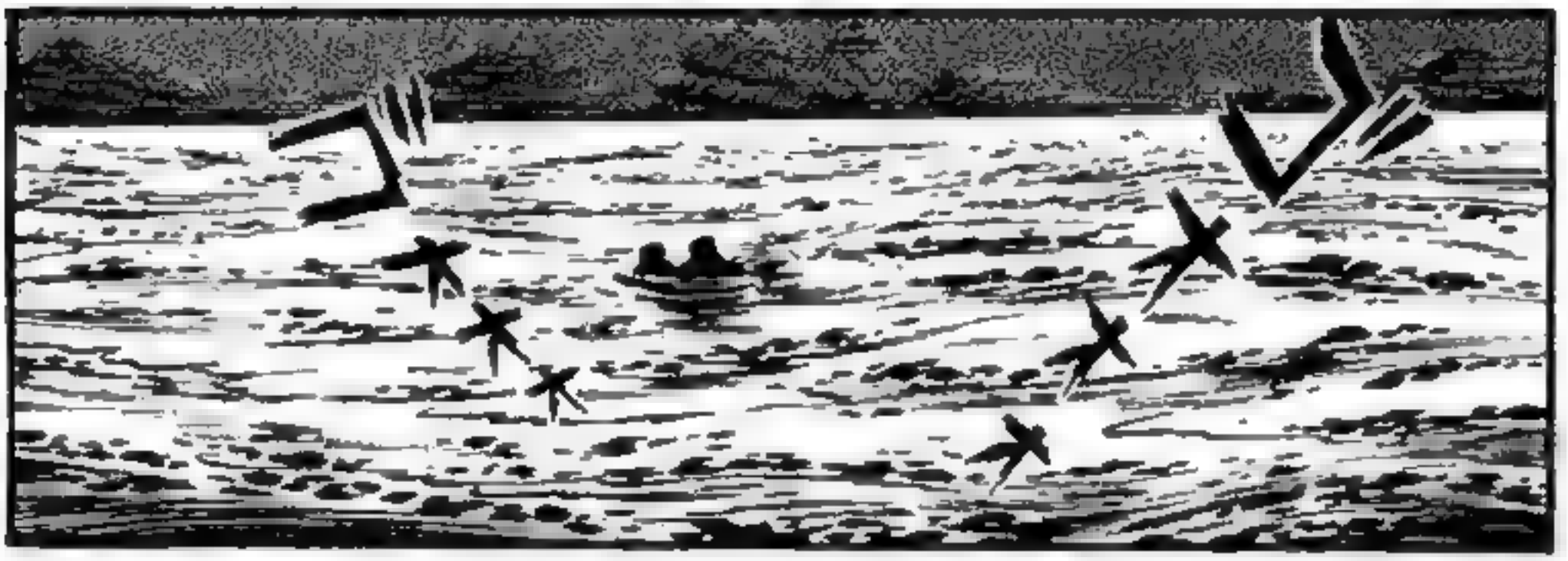
ALRIGHT, WE'RE GOING IN.

HM?

AHH!

CAPTAIN, OVER THERE!





DAMN IT. THE MONEY WE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN IF WE CAUGHT HIM...

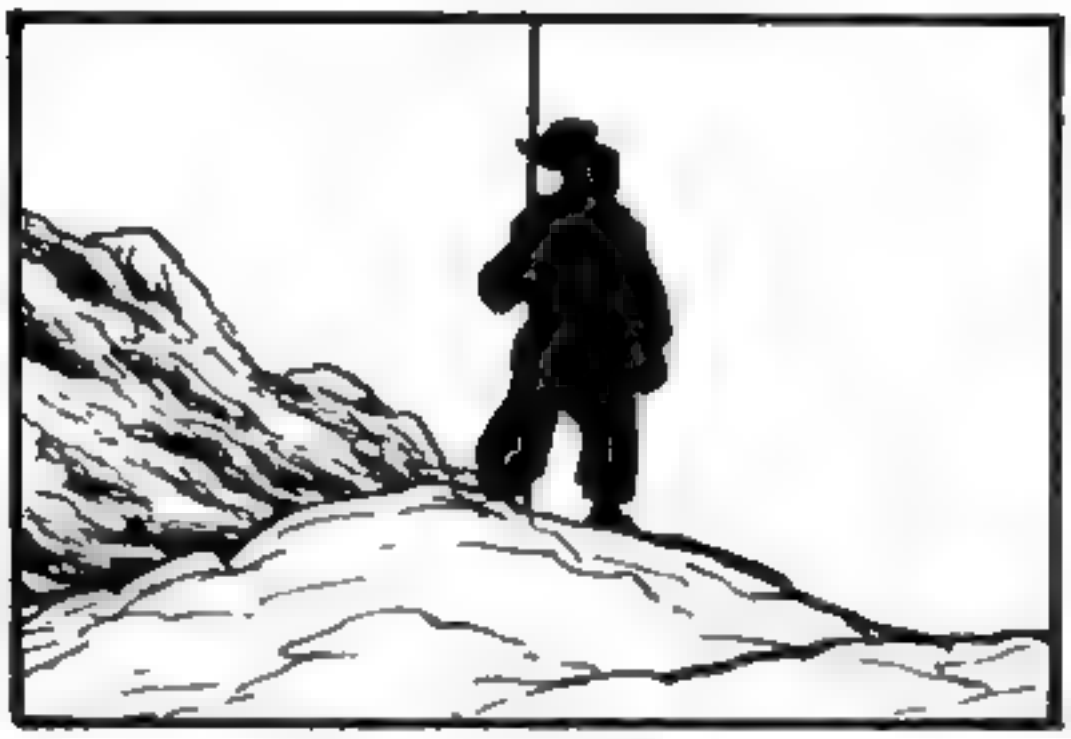
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! THEY'LL DROWN FOR SURE!
THEY'RE INSANE! THEY REALLY THINK THEY CAN CROSS THIS RIVER!?

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.

HANG ON JUST A LITTLE MORE, BROTHER. WE'RE SO CLOSE TO THE SHORE.

HAH...
HAH...
HAH...

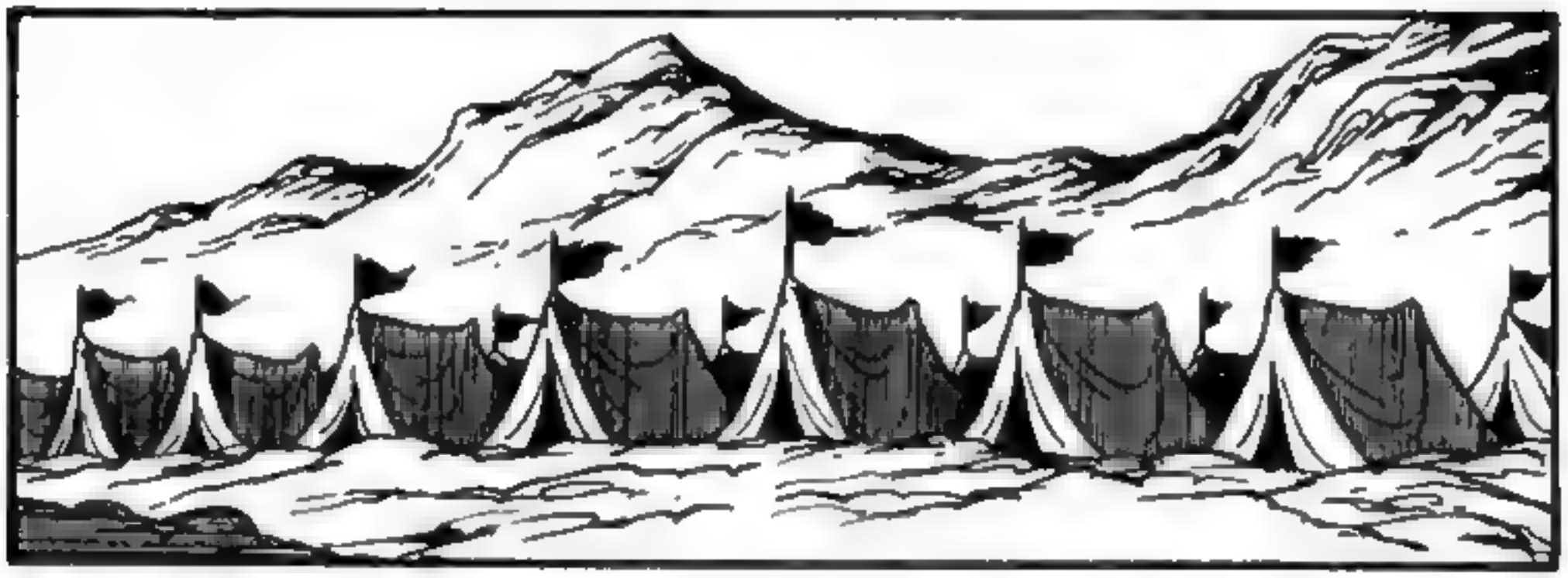
HAH...
HAH...
HAH...



MNN...

LIE LOW HERE, BROTHER. I'LL GO SEE IF THEY'RE FRIENDS OR FOES.

CAO HONG, I THINK I SEE A SOLDIER OVER THERE.



FLAG READS XU FOR XU RONG

IT'S AN INTRUDER!

THERE'S A SUSPICIOUS MAN BY THE RIVERSHORE!

ARREST HIM!

BROTHER, WE'VE BEEN FOUND BY ENEMIES!

CURSES.

OVER THERE!

AS YOU SAY.

LET US SHOW THEM THE PRIDE OF THE CAO FAMILY BY FIGHTING UNTIL THE VERY END.

SADLY NOT...

CAO HONG, I DON'T THINK WE'LL BE able TO ESCAPE THIS TIME.

AH!

HMM!?

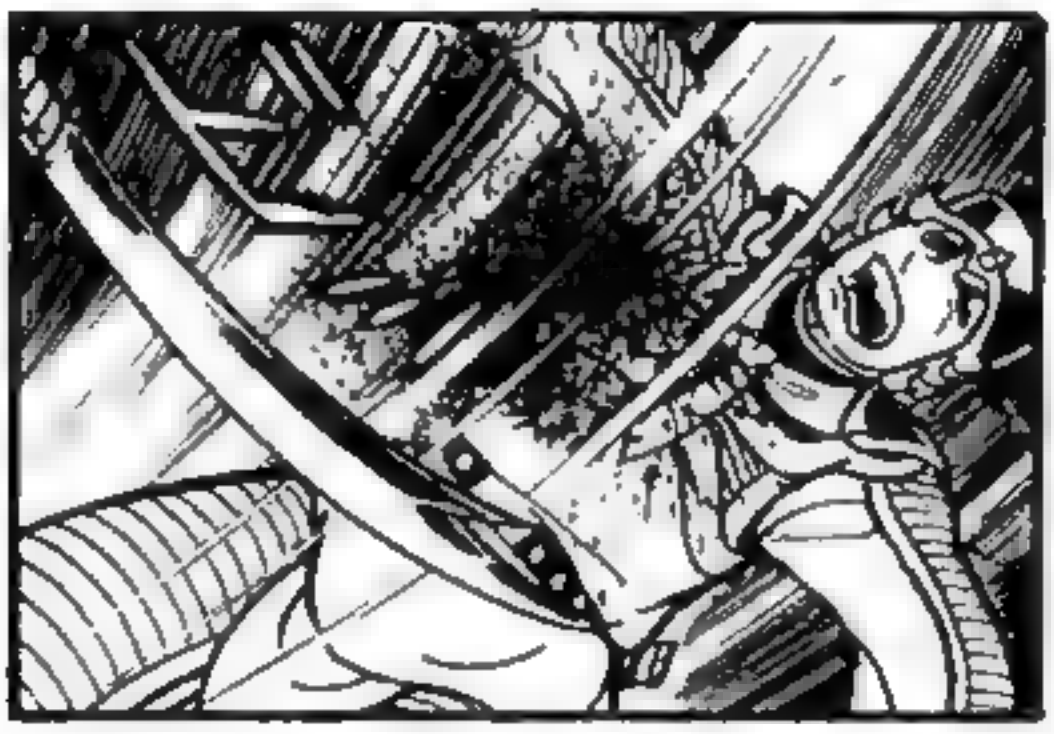
?

HUH!?

IT'S CAO CAO'S TROOPS!
ENEMY FORCES!

ENEMIES!

MINE!?



OHH! IT'S CAO REN!

AND YUE JIN!

CAO REN!
YUE JIN!

PLEASE GET ON MY HORSE, SIR!

I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU TWO ALIVE AS WELL!

IS SIR ALRIGHT?

PULL BACK!

FROM MY FORCE OF TEN THOUSAND MEN...?

IS THIS ALL THE MEN THAT MANAGED TO SURVIVE,

THESE MEN SHED THEIR TEARS OF JOY FOR THAT VERY REASON.

BUT AS LONG AS SIR IS STILL ALIVE, WE STILL HAVE HOPE OF RISING ONCE MORE.

HOW SAD WOULD MY MEN BE HAD I TAKEN MY OWN LIFE BACK THEN WHEN I LOST ALL HOPE? I MUST NEVER TREAT MY LIFE SO LIGHTLY FROM NOW ON.

I WAS MISTAKEN.

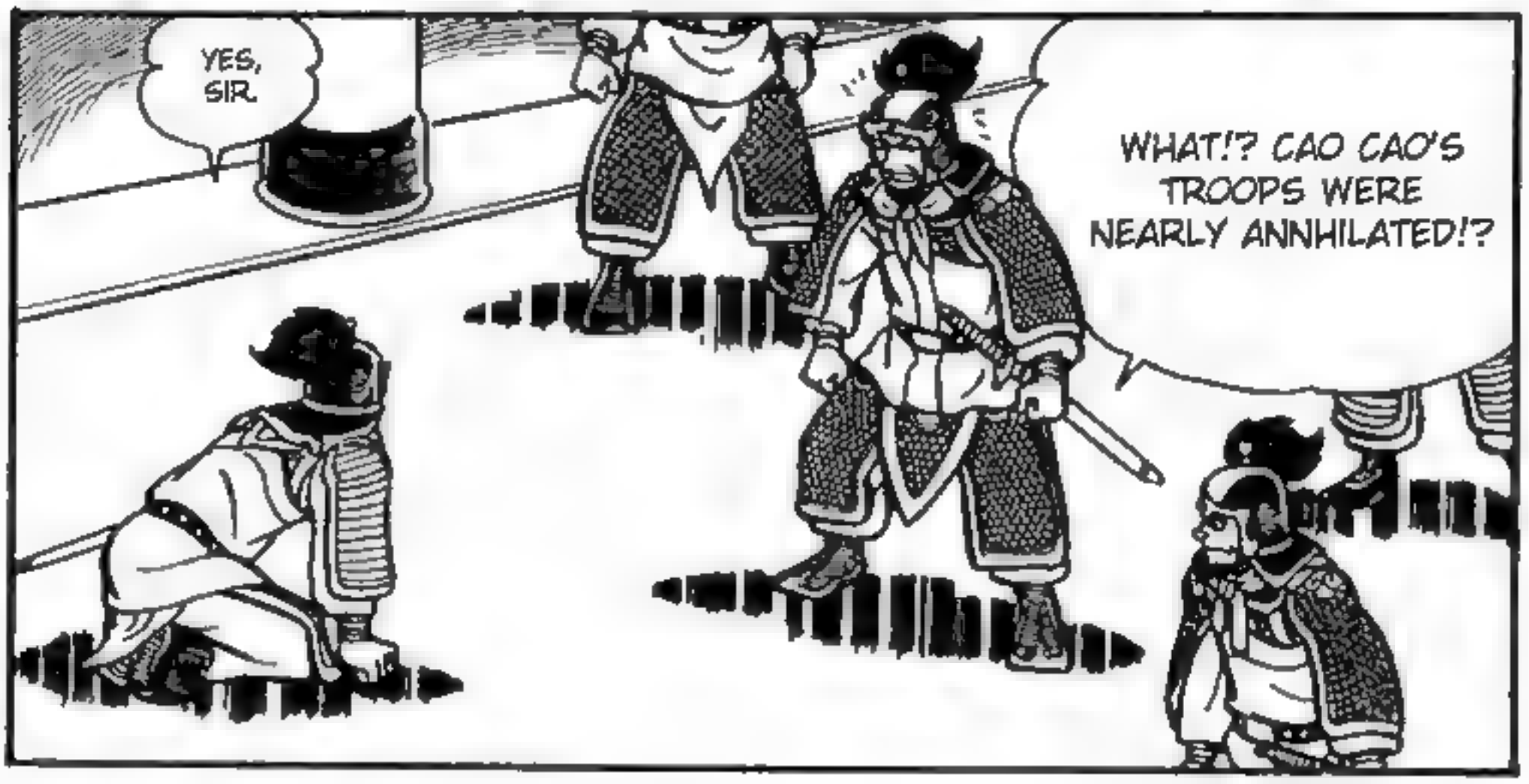
I AM NOT SAYING THIS TO SOMEHOW EXCUSE MY LOSS. I TRULY HAVE LEARNED A LOT FROM THIS DEFEAT.

DONG ZHUO, YOU'VE TAUGHT ME A VALUABLE LESSON.

O' HEAVENS! SEND TO ME, AS MANY TRIALS AND HARDSHIPS AS YOU WANT FOR I SWEAR TO OVERCOME THEM AND BECOME A HERO, VILLAINOUS OR NOT!

A MAN ONCE SAID TO ME THAT I WOULD BECOME A VILLAINOUS HERO IN CHAOTIC TIMES.

THE IMPERIAL SEAL



AND THAT ARROGANT LAD THOUGHT HE COULD TAKE DONG ZHUO DOWN WITH A MERE TEN THOUSAND...

DONG ZHUO ABANDONING THE CAPITAL LIKE THAT MUST HAVE MEANT HE HAD SOME SORT OF A PLAN.

HA, WHAT'D I TELL HIM!

I HOPE YOU GENTLEMEN LEARN FROM THIS AS WELL AND WILL REFRAIN FROM RASHLY ACTING ALONE IN THE FUTURE.

THE EMPEROR'S STAR HAS GROWN FAINT AND THE NEARBY STARS HAVE ALL SCATTERED AWAY.

HOW OMINOUS...

HM?

THESE CHAOTIC TIMES WILL SURELY CONTINUE AND THE FLAMES OF VIOLENCE WILL SPREAD FURTHER OUT...

HOW WAS THE MEETING, SIR?

HMPH, IT WAS JUST THEM LAUGHING AT CAO CAO AND HIS RECENT DEFEAT.

AH, GENERAL!

LET'S RETURN TO OUR ENCAMP-MENTS.

IS THAT SO, SIR?

EVEN THOUGH SO MANY HAVE GATHERED TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO, THERE ISN'T A SINGLE TRUSTWORTHY MAN HERE.

HM?

SIR, THERE'S SOMETHING IN THAT WELL.

PERHAPS IT IS THE SPAR-KLING OF SOME GEM.

WHAT IS IT?

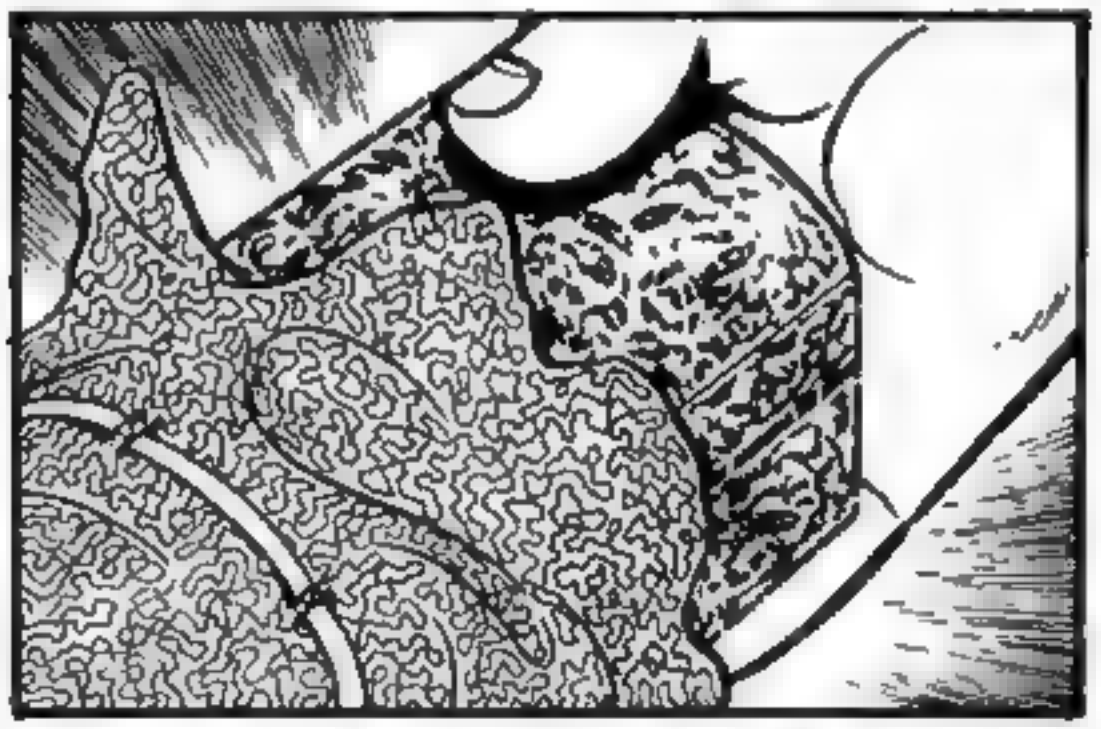
ALRIGHT, HAVE SOMEONE GO DOWN AND CHECK.

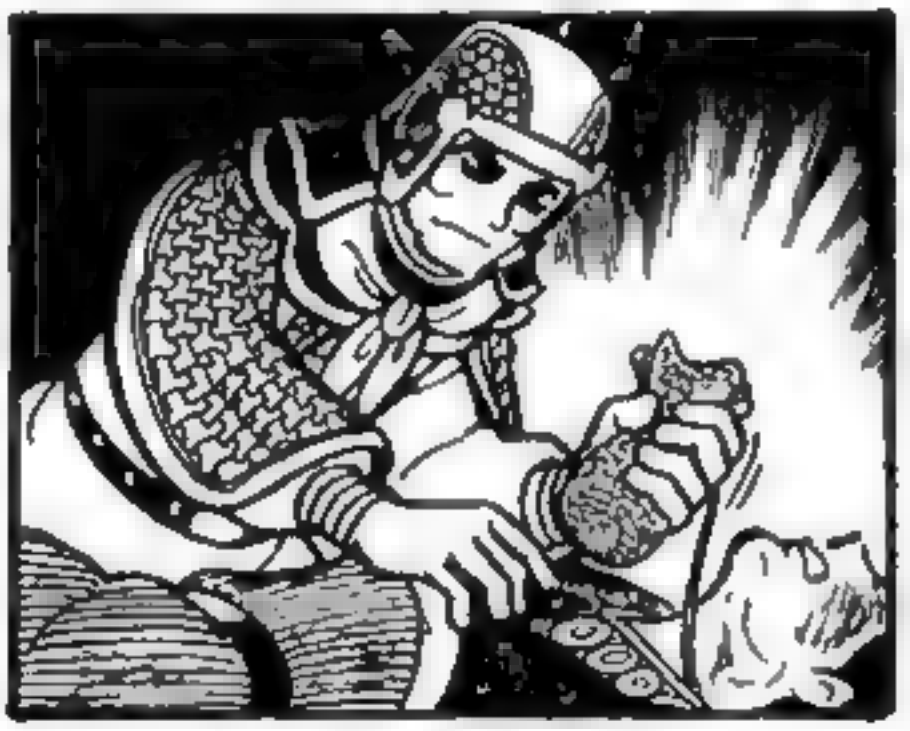
IT'S COMING FROM THIS CORPSE.

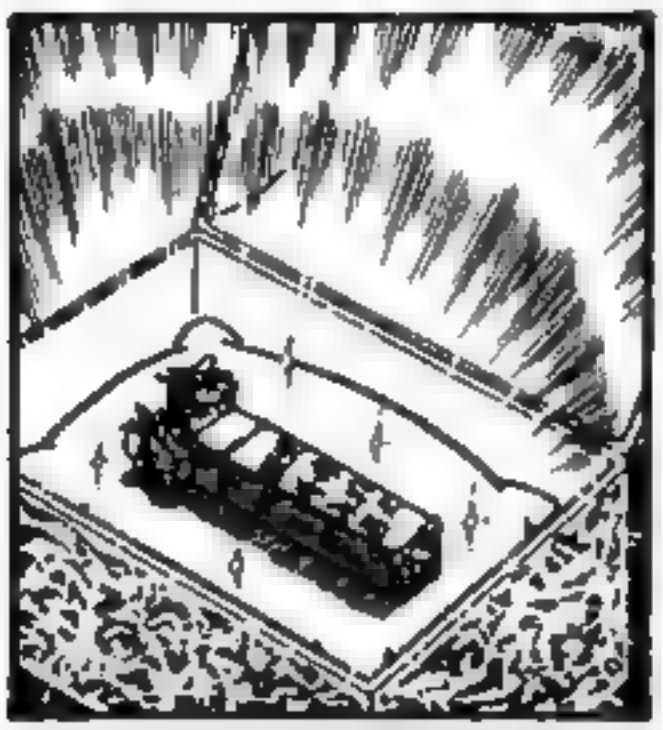
AHH!

ALRIGHT, PULL THE ROPE BACK UP!

IT MUST BE INSIDE THIS BAG.







HMM, IT SEEMS TO BE LOCKED.

YES, SIR.

CALL CHENG PU OVER HERE. HE'S QUITE KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT THIS SORT OF THING.

OHH! THIS DEFINITELY IS NO ORDINARY SEAL!

THE MORE I LOOK AT IT, THE MORE MAGNIFICENT IT LOOKS!

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS?

AH, CHENG PU.

YOU CALLED, SIR?

WE FOUND IT ON A WOMAN'S DEAD BODY IN THE WELL.

W-WHERE DID SIR FIND THIS SEAL!?

SIR, THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE IMPERIAL SEAL.

?

PLEASE FORGIVE US, MILADY...

WHAT!

IT IS ALSO SAID THAT WHOEVER HOLDS THE IMPERIAL SEAL WILL HOLD THE WORLD AS WELL.

IT HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS IN THE IMPERIAL FAMILY EVER SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HAN.

A SEAL THAT ONLY THE EMPEROR OF THIS NATION CARRIES,

TO AN EMPEROR, IT IS MORE VALUABLE THAN HIS LIFE.

THIS SEAL IS *THAT* VALUABLE?

HMM... AND NOW IT HAS PASSED INTO MY HANDS.

IS THAT SO...?

THIS MUST BE A SIGN FOR SIR TO ASCEND TO THE EMPEROR'S THRONE AND BRING PEACE TO THIS COUNTRY.

SIR, I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE HEAVENS WHICH HAVE GIVEN YOU THE SEAL.

WELL, LET US INTER-PRET IT THAT WAY THEN.

YES, SIR.

LET NO ONE ELSE FIND OUT ABOUT THIS. THE PUNISHMENT FOR LEAKING THIS INCIDENT WILL BE DEATH, YOU HEAR?

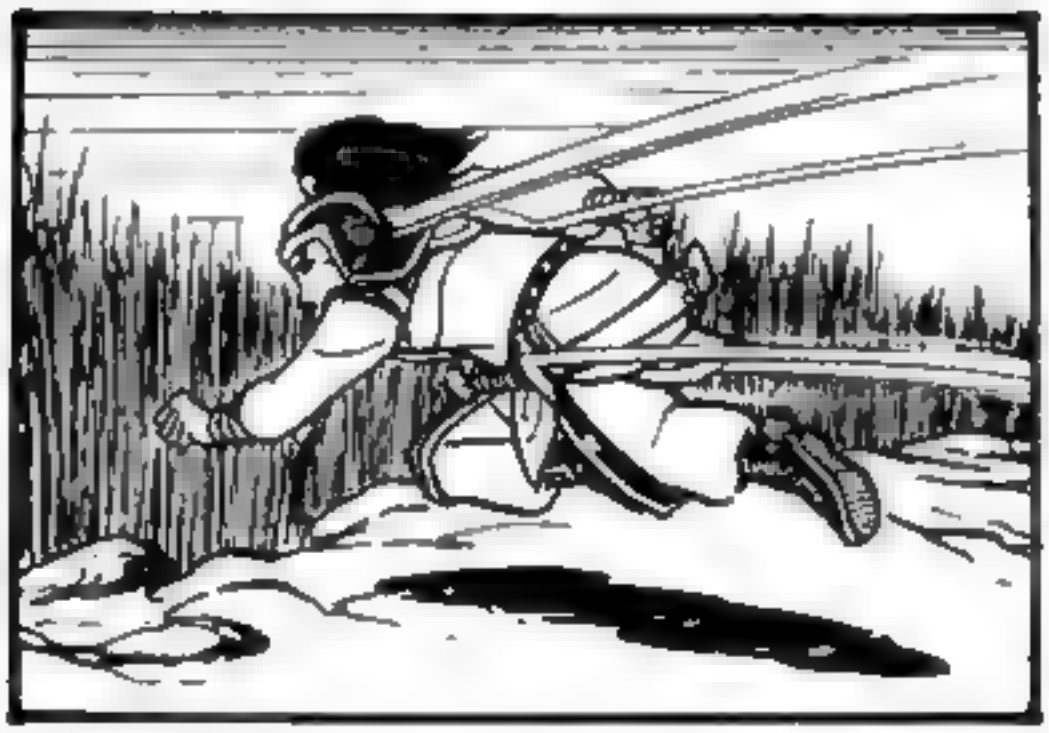
PUT THE CORPSE BACK INTO THE WELL.

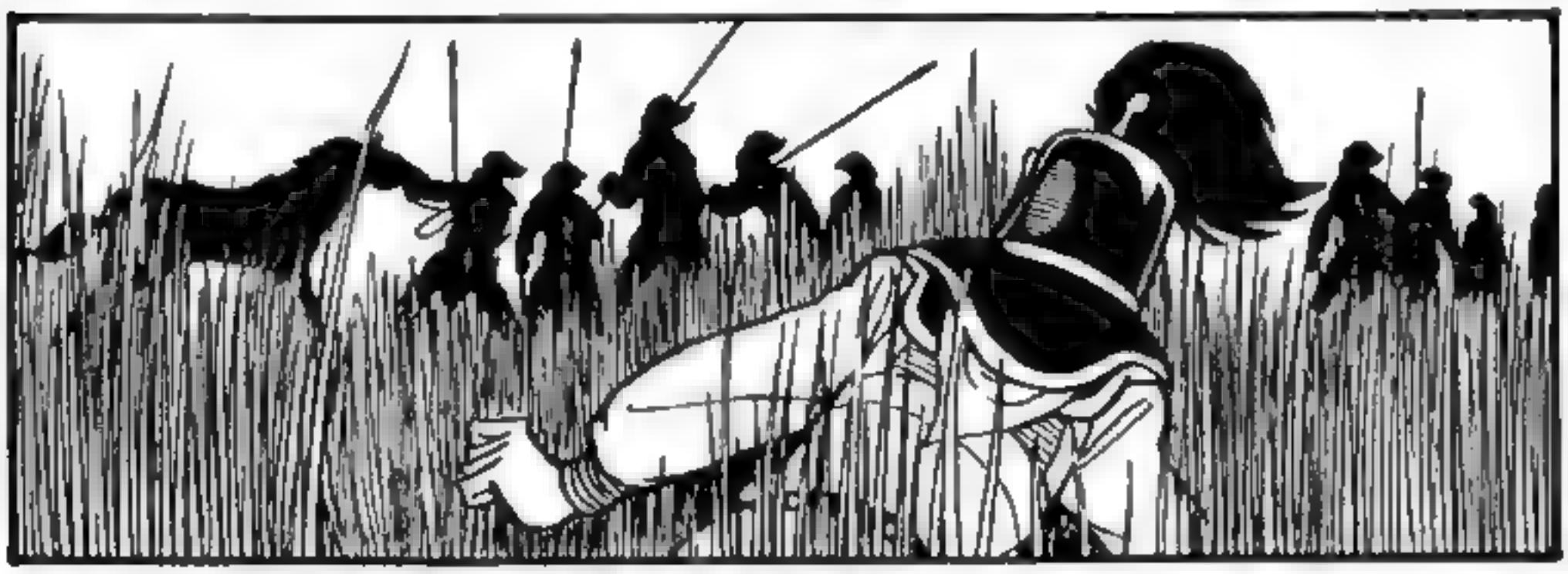
ALRIGHT, LET US RETURN TO OUR CAMPS AND MAKE PREPARATIONS TO RETREAT BACK TO OUR HOME AT ONCE. NOTHING WILL COME OF STAYING HERE ANY LONGER WITH THESE SO-CALLED "ALLIES."

STOP YOUR CHATTERING. WE ARE PULLING BACK BECAUSE GENERAL SUN JIAN IS ILL.

WHO KNOWS?

JUST WHY THE HELL ARE WE PULLING BACK AFTER WE'VE FINALLY MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO LUOYANG?





WHO IS IT?
TELL COM-MANDER YUAN SHAO THAT I HAVE URGENT NEWS.

OPEN UP! OPEN UP!

FINE THEN, I'LL GO LET HIM KNOW.

THIS REPORT IS OF UTMOST URGENCY!
HE'S IN HIS SLEEPING QUAR-TERS, COME BACK IN THE MORNING.

COMMANDER YUAN SHAO HAS AGREED TO SEE YOU. YOU MAY ENTER.

YES, SIR.

ARE YOU THE ONE WHO HAD URGENT NEWS TO REPORT TO ME?

WHAT!?

T-THE TRUTH IS THAT GENERAL SUN JIAN HAS FOUND THE IMPERIAL SEAL.

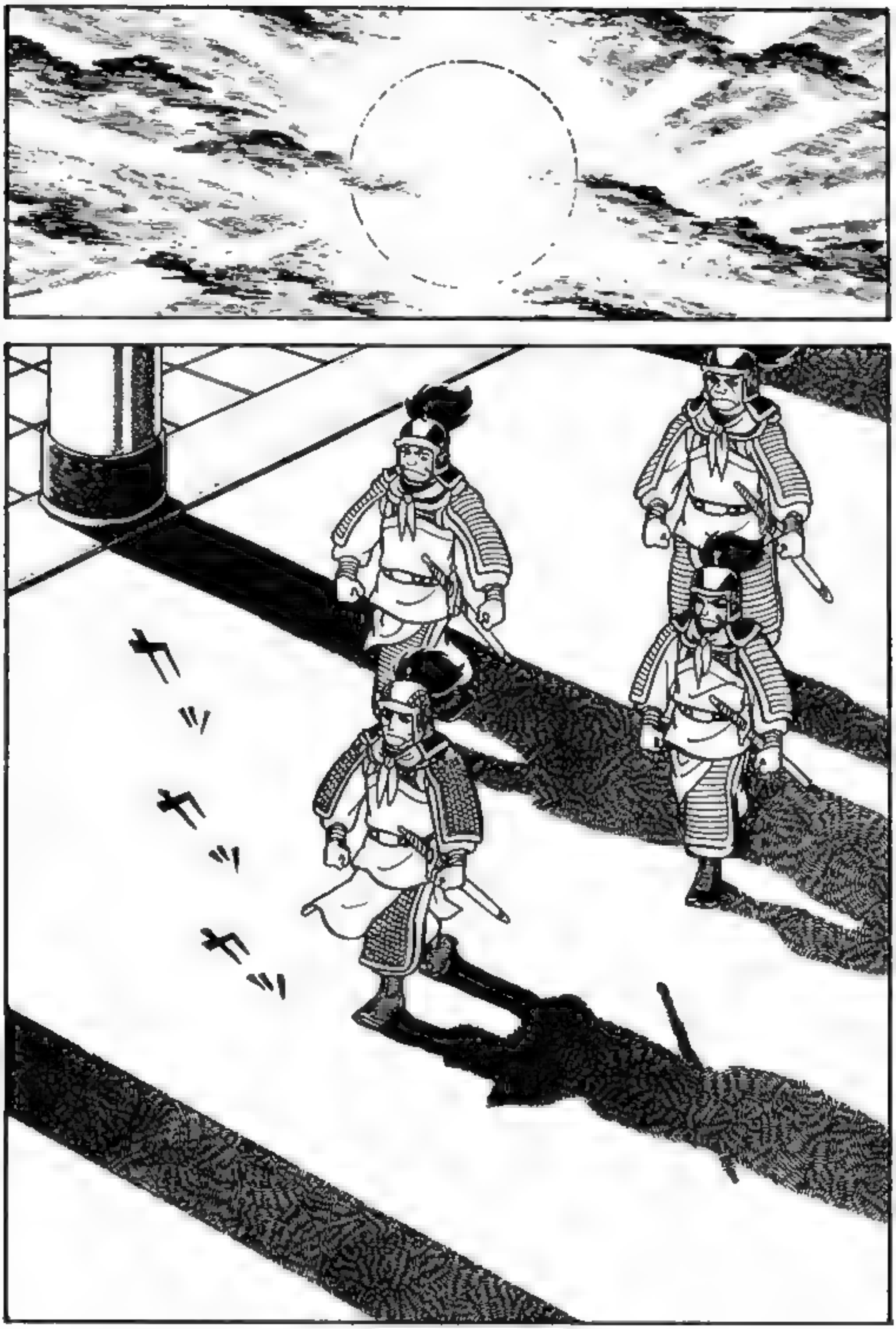
I THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME KNOW.

YES, SIR. AND HE PLANS TO LEAVE FOR HOME IN THE MORNING TOMORROW WITH THE EXCUSE THAT HE HAS FALLEN ILL.

I WOULD BE GLAD IF I WERE REWA-RDED...

HEH HEH HEH

FINE, HERE.



AH, GOOD. I SEE YOU GENTLEMEN HAVE ALREADY GATHERED HERE.

AND SO I WISH TO RETURN BACK HOME BRIEFLY TO RECUPERATE.

TO BE HONEST, I HAVE BEEN A LITTLE UNDER THE WEATHER LATELY AND IT'S BEEN HINDERING MY ABILITY TO LEAD MY MEN.

COMMANDER YUAN SHAO, I HAVE COME TO GIVE MY GREETINGS BEFORE I DEPART.

HAHA, IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY, GENERAL SUN JIAN?

WHAT!?

I MUST SAY, GENERAL, YOU ARE QUITE THE ACTOR!

WHAT!?

JUST WHAT DID YOU PICK UP FROM THE WELL LAST NIGHT?

I ALREADY KNOW THAT YOU'VE FOUND THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM A WELL LAST NIGHT!

ARE YOU PLANNING TO TAKE OVER THE THRONE WITH THE SEAL?

WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?

TO SECRETLY TAKE POSSESSION OF IT IS PROOF OF YOUR TREACHERY!

THE IMPERIAL SEAL BELONGS TO ONLY THE EMPEROR AND NO ONE ELSE.

WHAT!?

OH, DRAWING YOUR SWORD NOW?

WHAT IMPU-DENCE ...!

DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULD SWALLOW YOUR PATHETIC LIES!? LET US SETTLE THIS HERE AND NOW.

MEN, PLEASE SHEATH BACK YOUR SWORDS!

WAIT! WAIT!

IF WORD OF THIS WERE TO GET OUT, NOT ONLY WILL THE PEOPLE LOSE FAITH IN US, BUT DONG ZHUO WILL CLAP HIS HANDS IN LAUGHTER!

JUST WHAT WOULD COME OF SPILLING BLOOD BETWEEN COMRADES?

EXACTLY! THE PEOPLE WILL WONDER WHETHER WE'VE REALLY ASSEMBLED TO RESTORE HAN OR FOR OUR OWN SELFISH GAINS!

HMPH, THEN SHOW ME PROOF THAT SUN JIAN HASN'T STOLEN THE SEAL!

GENERAL SUN JIAN HAS ALREADY VEHEMENTLY DENIED THE ACCUSATIONS SO PLEASE SIR...

YES, YES, WE UNDERSTAND SO PLEASE SHEATH YOUR SWORD AND YOU MAY WITHDRAW.

A WARRIOR TELLS NO LIES!

LET US HURRY BACK HOME!
ALRIGHT, THEN!

URGENT REPORT FOR COMMANDER YUAN SHAO!

WHAT!?

SUN JIAN HAS PULLED BACK AND IS RETURNING FOR HOME AS QUICKLY AS HE CAN, SIR.

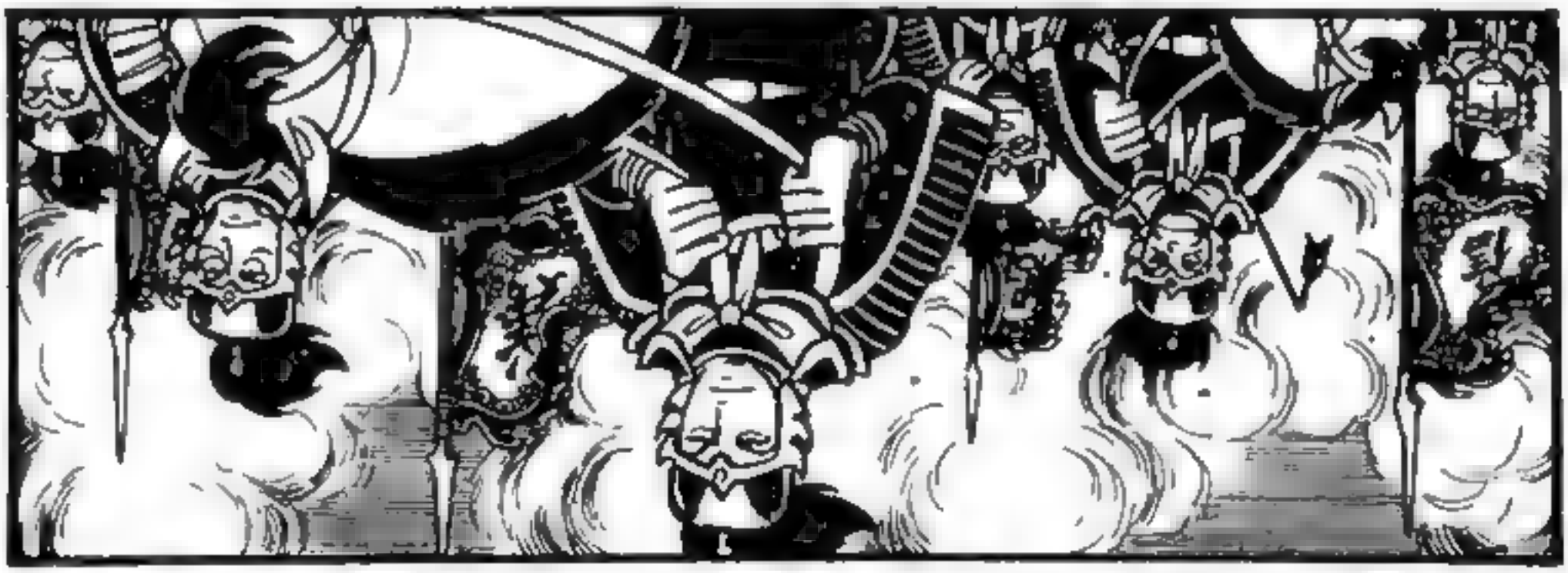
WHAT IS IT?

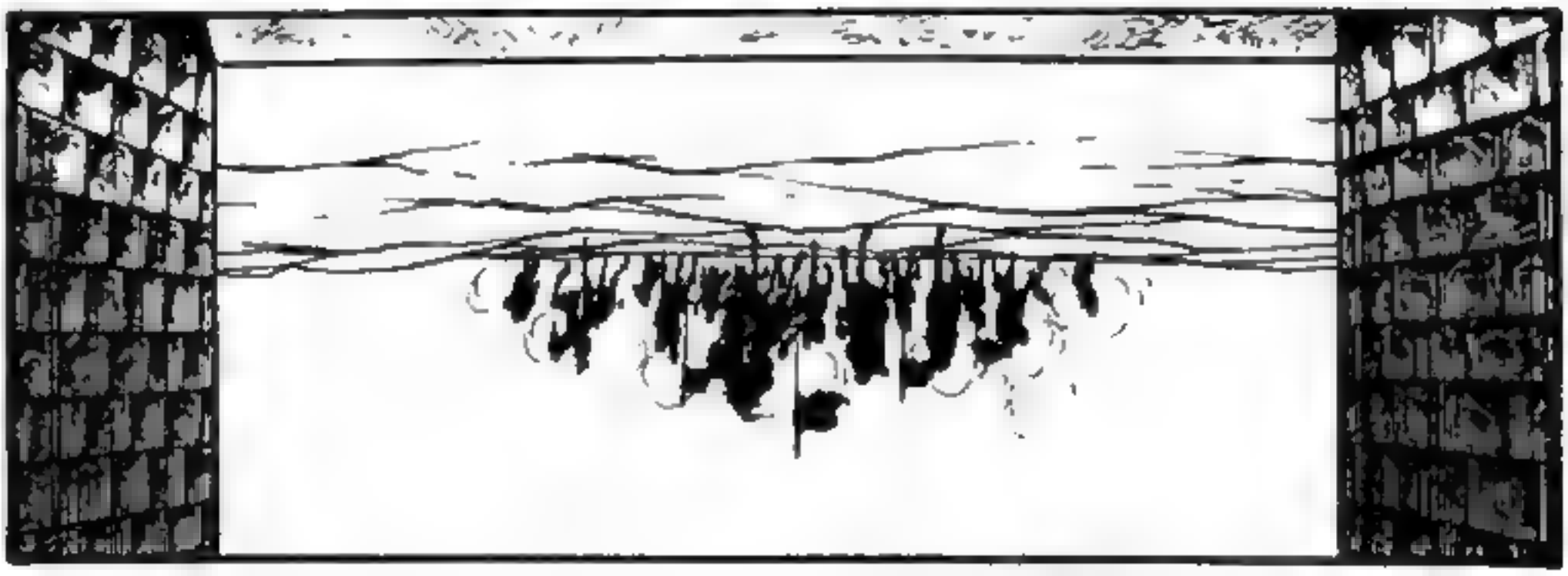
WITHOUT A DOUBT, HE'S PLANNING TO TAKE OVER THE THRONE ONE DAY!

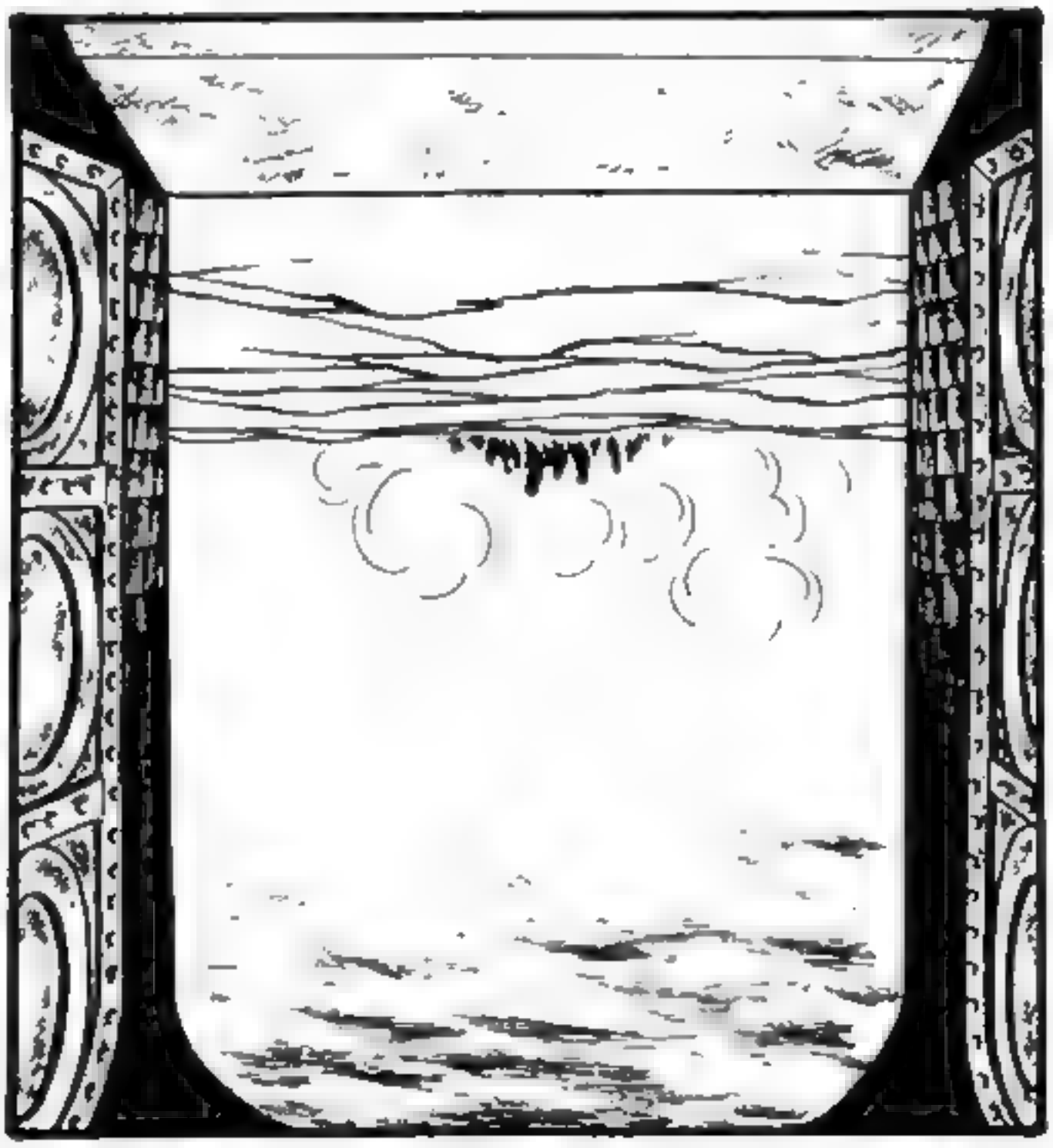
THAT SUN JIAN DEFINITELY HAS THE SEAL!

DID YOU HEAR THAT!?

WE MUST STRIKE AT ONCE! HE TOO, IS A REBEL OF HAN!







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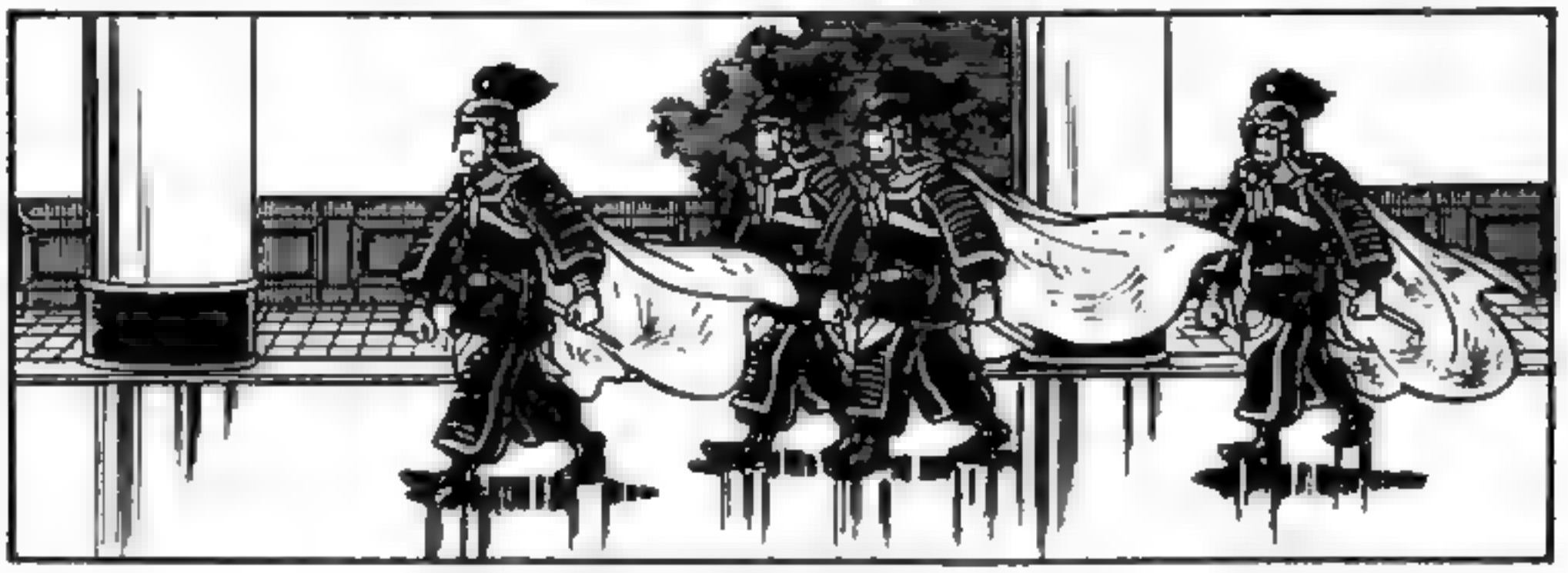
IT APPEARS THAT HIS TROOPS HAVE BEEN BATTERED QUITE HARSHLY.

IT'S GENERAL CAO CAO.



AH, CAO CAO.

WE WERE OVER-JOYED WHEN WE HEARD THE NEWS THAT YOU HAD ESCAPED SAFELY.

I APOLO-
GIZE,

LET US HOLD A BANQUET TO CELEBRATE YOUR WELL-BEING!

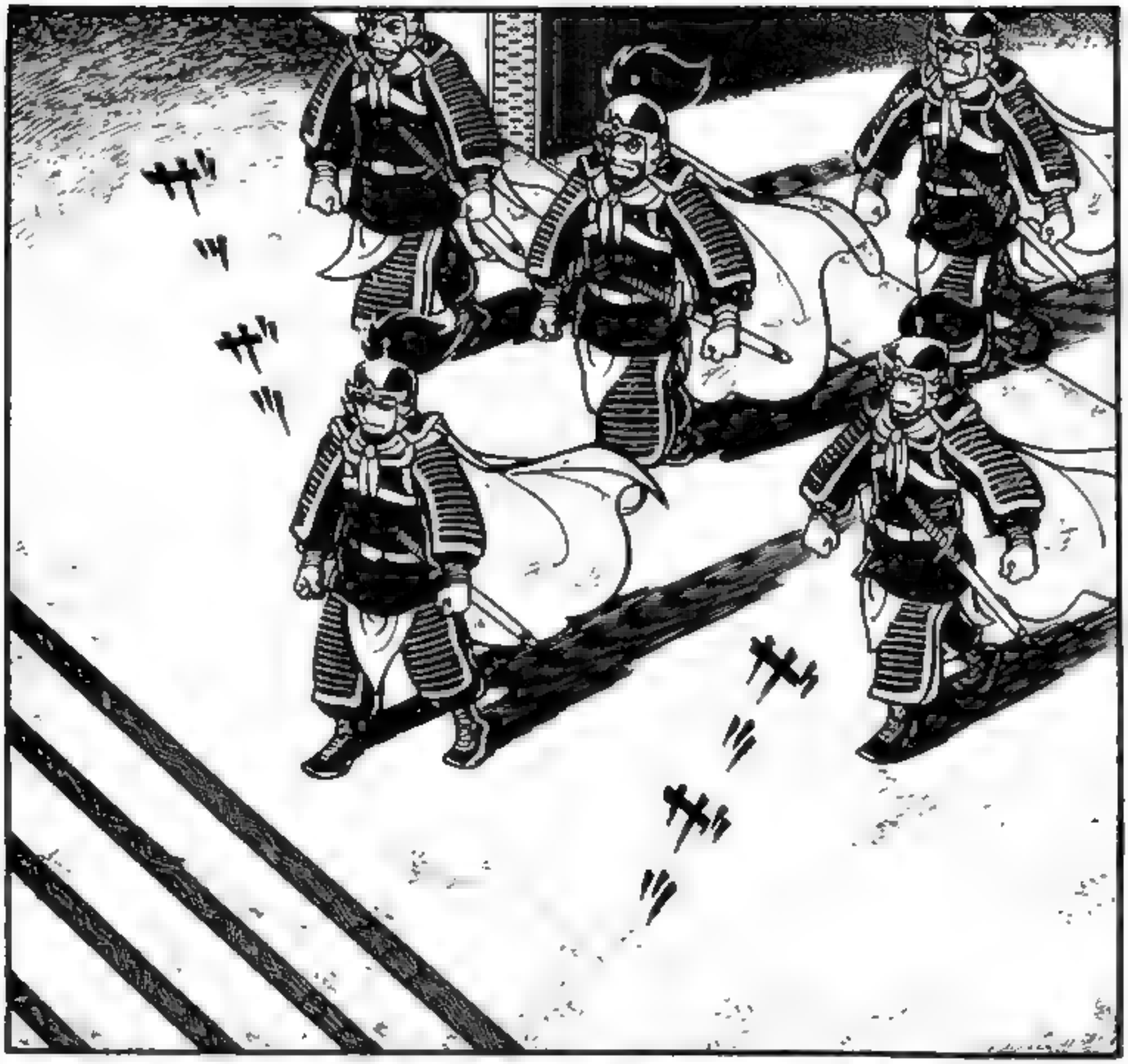
FIGHTING HERE WITH MY MEAGER TROOPS WILL BE OF NO USE TO YOU, ESPECIALLY IF MY HEART IS NOT INTO IT.

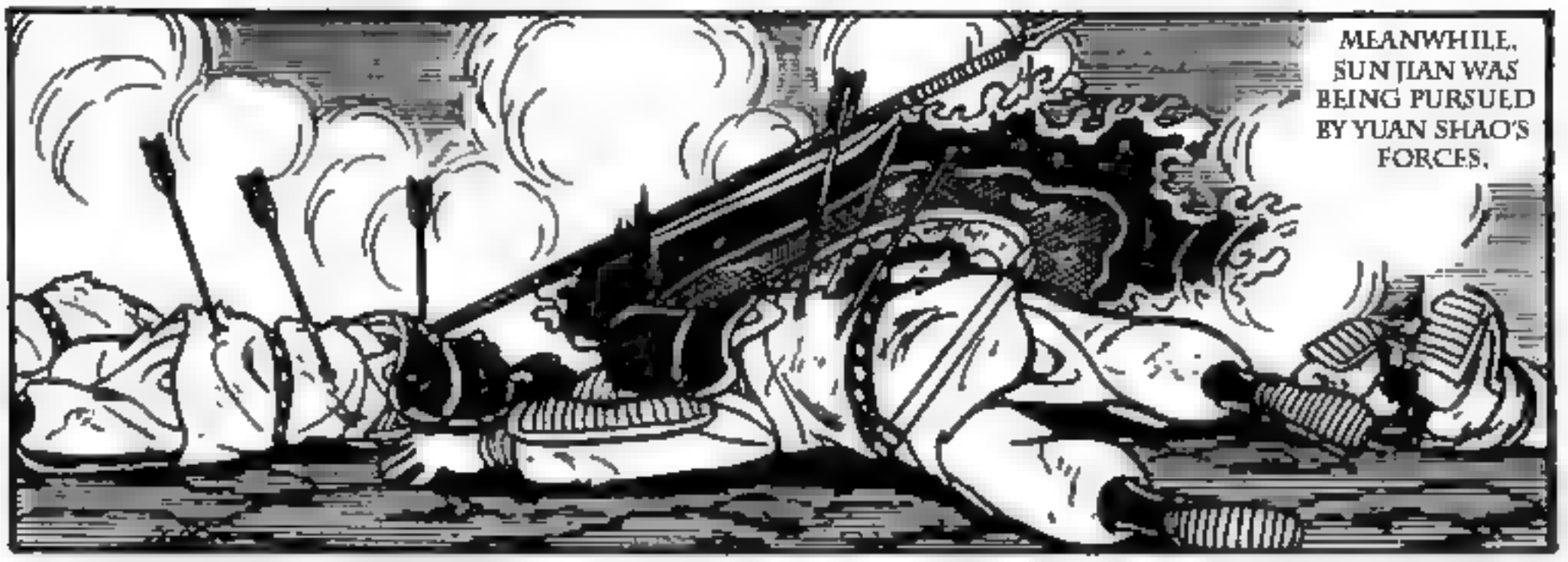
WHAT!?

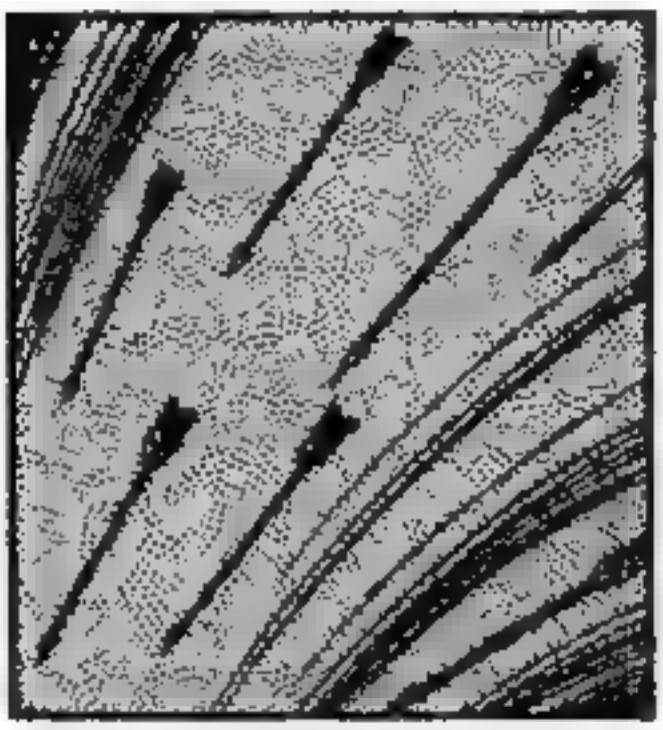
BUT I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO RETURN BACK HOME AND THINK THINGS OVER.

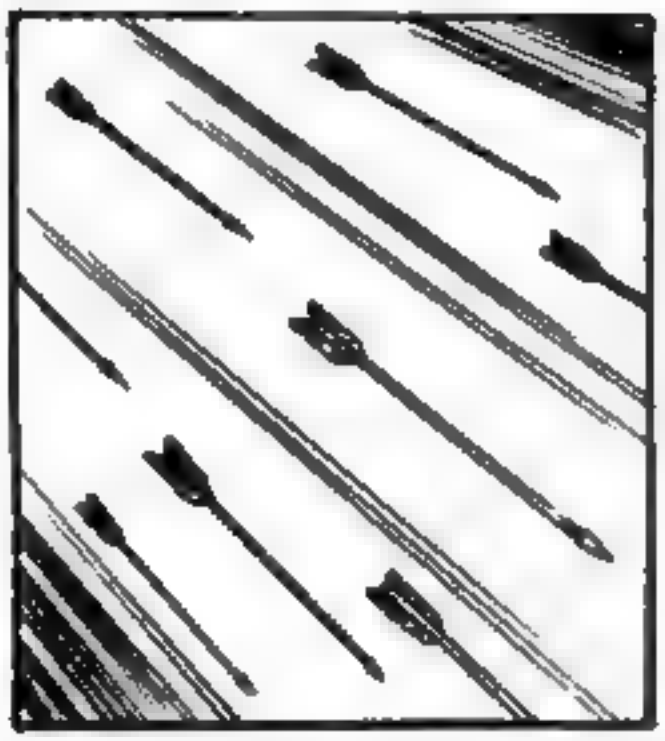
PLEASE EXCUSE US, SIR.

AFTER MY RECENT DEFEAT, I REALIZED THAT I STILL HAVE MUCH TO LEARN.




MEANWHILE, SUN JIAN WAS BEING PURSUED BY YUAN SHAO'S FORCES.





AND RECEIVING CRITICAL DAMAGE

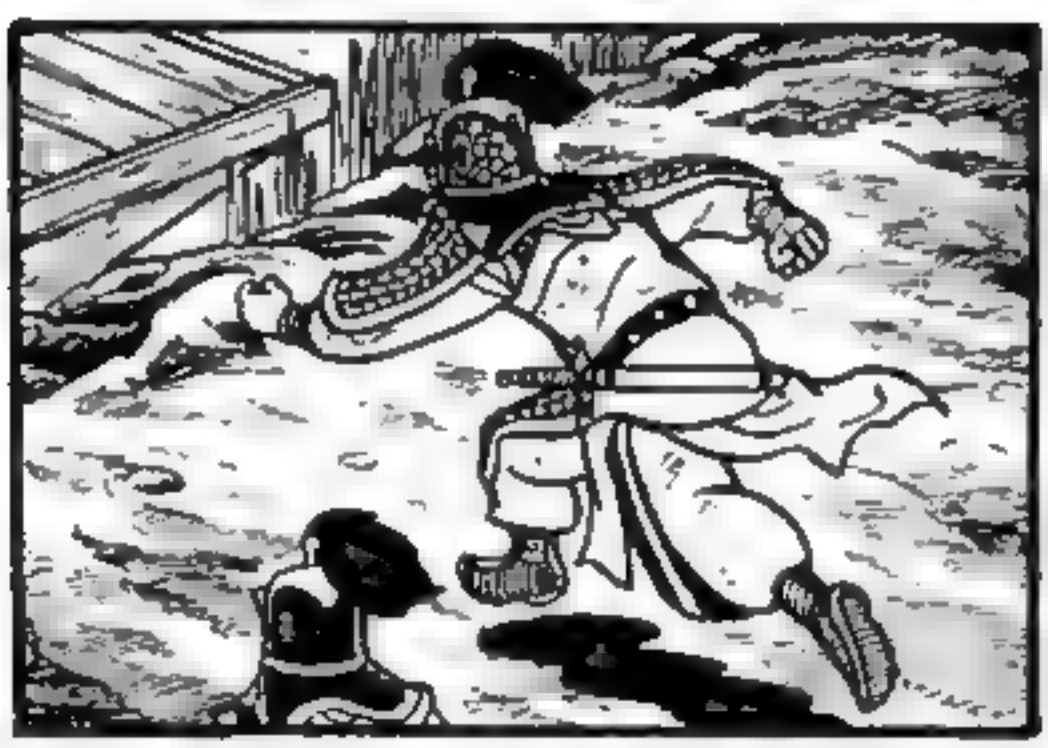
AT THIS RATE, OUR FORCES WILL BE ANNHI-LATED, SIR!

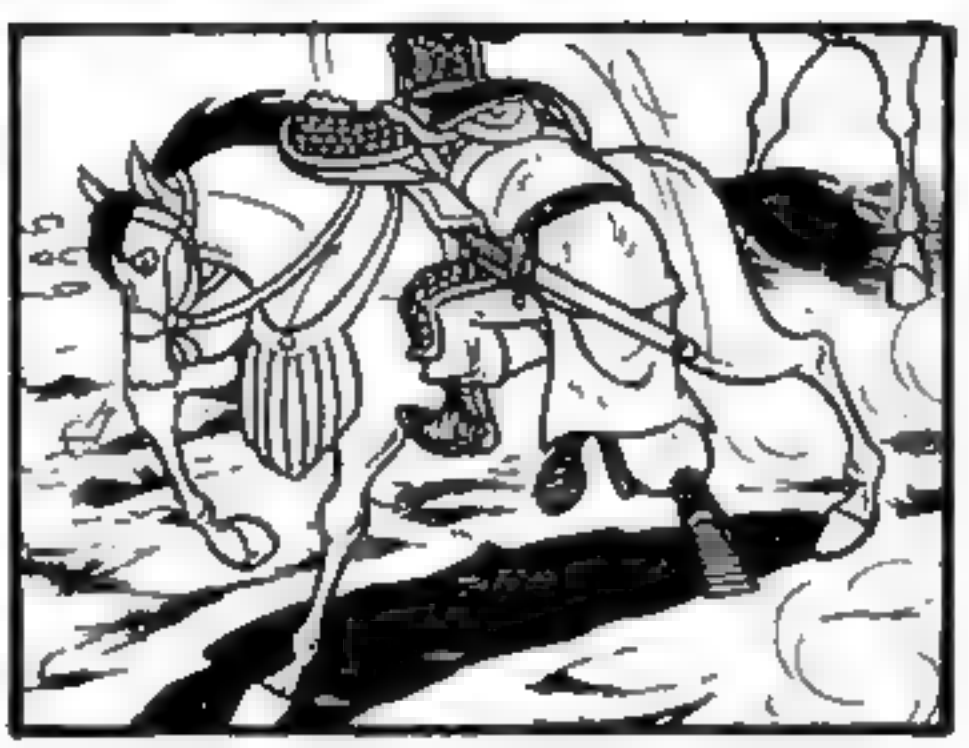
GENERAL, YUAN SHAO'S FORCES ARE CEASELESSLY CONTINUING TO PURSUE US!

ALRIGHT, I SHALL.

I ADVISE SIR TO ESCAPE ACROSS THE RIVER WITH THE BOAT OVER THERE!

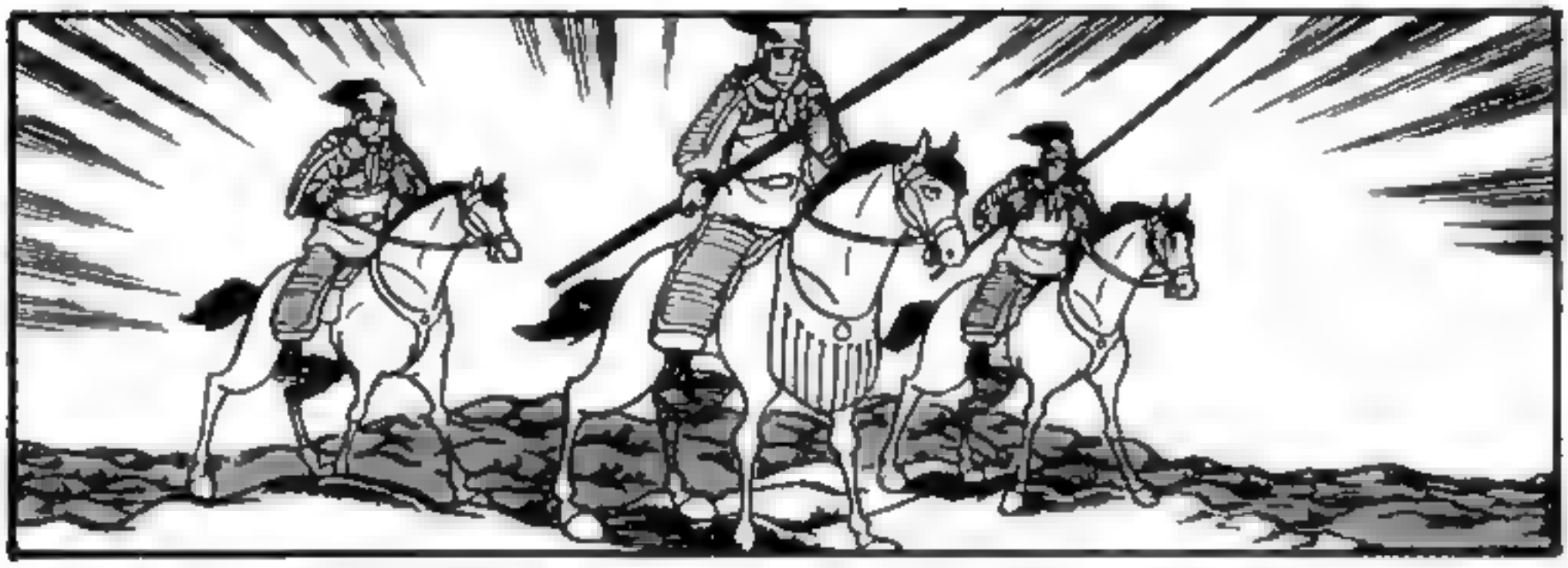
GENERAL! QUICKLY, OVER HERE!





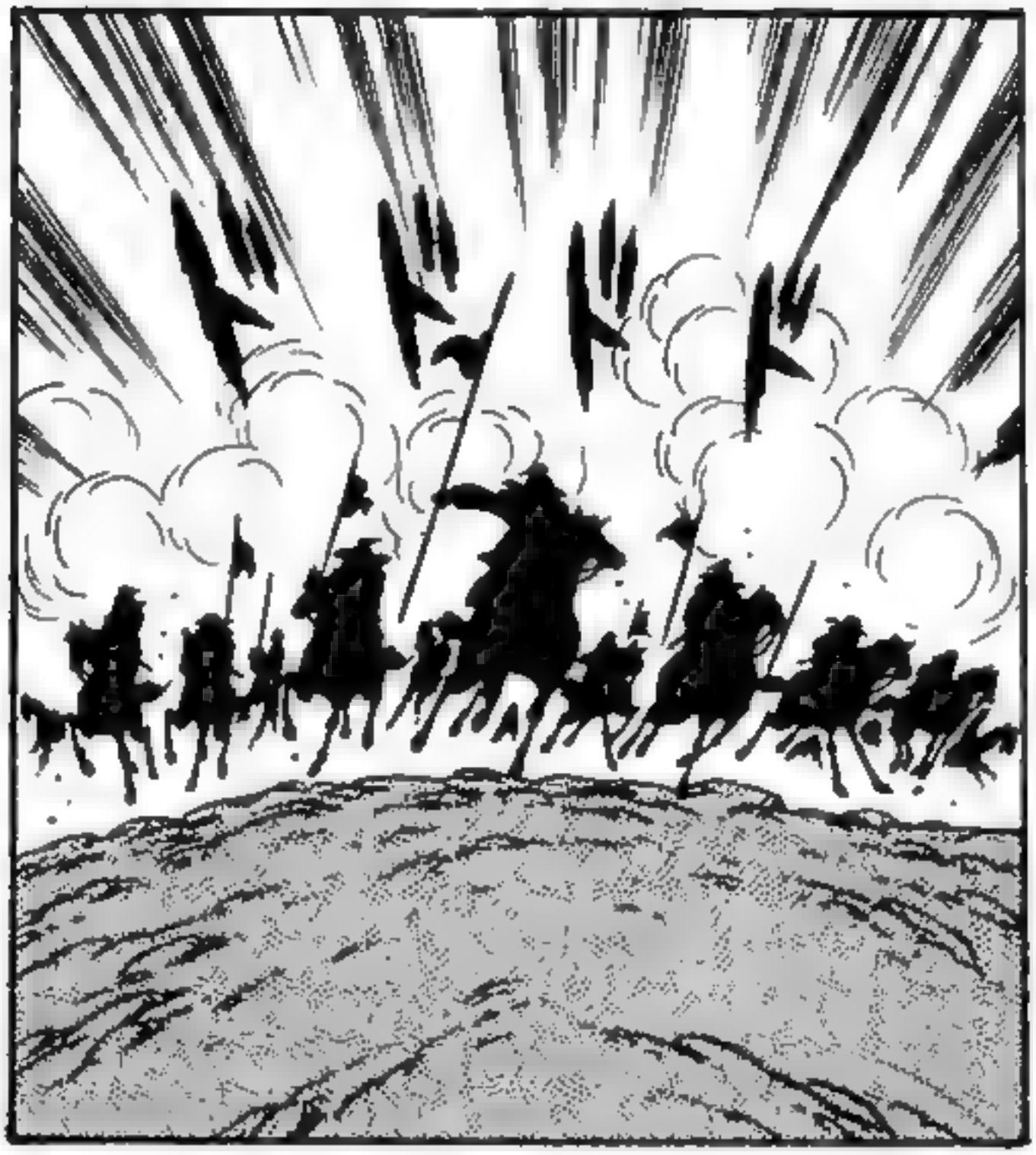
HMM?

LET US MAKE HASTE.



OH PLEASE SIR, THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ROOM FOR ALL OF US ON THAT SMALL BOAT.

WHAT ARE YOU MEN DOING THERE? QUICKLY GET ON THE BOAT!

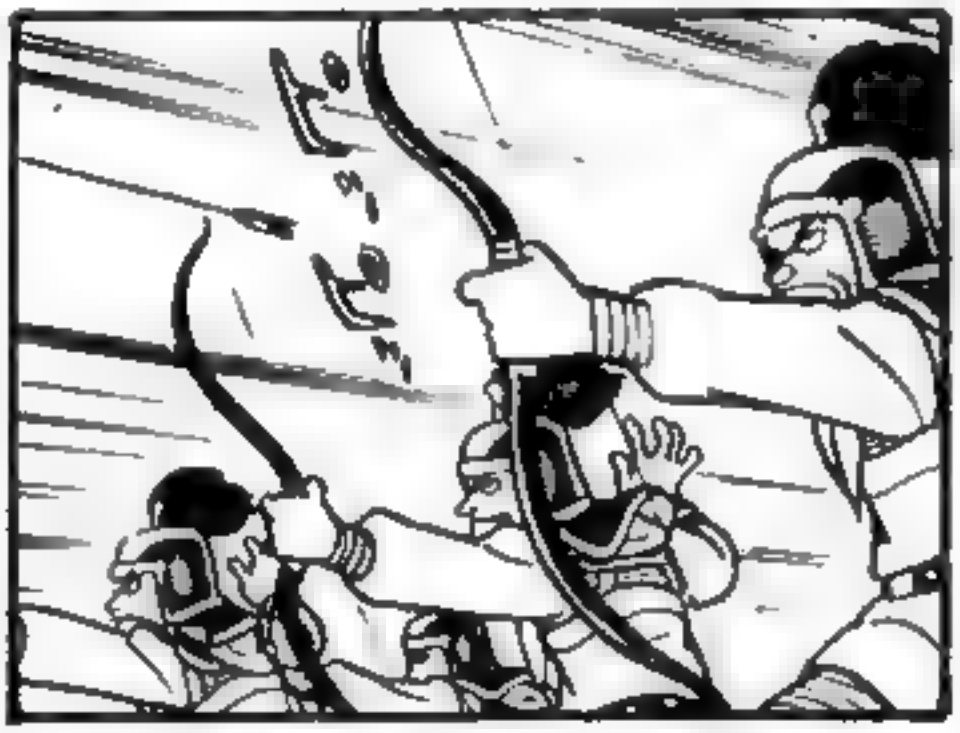


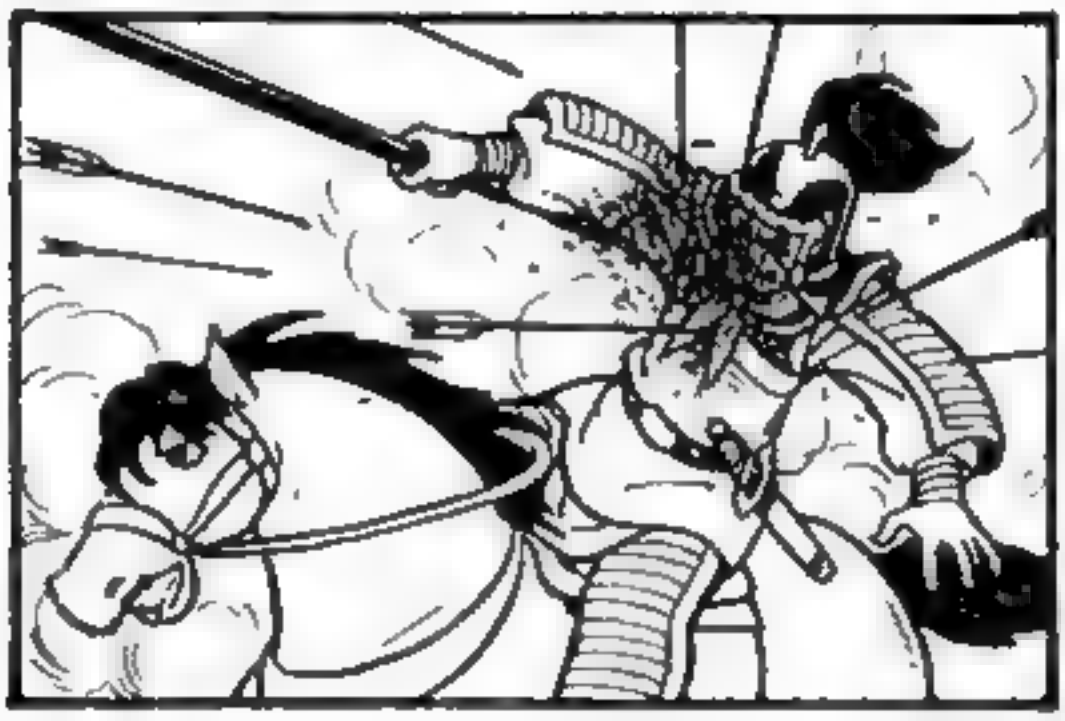
WE SHALL FEND OFF YUAN SHAO'S TROOPS FROM HERE FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

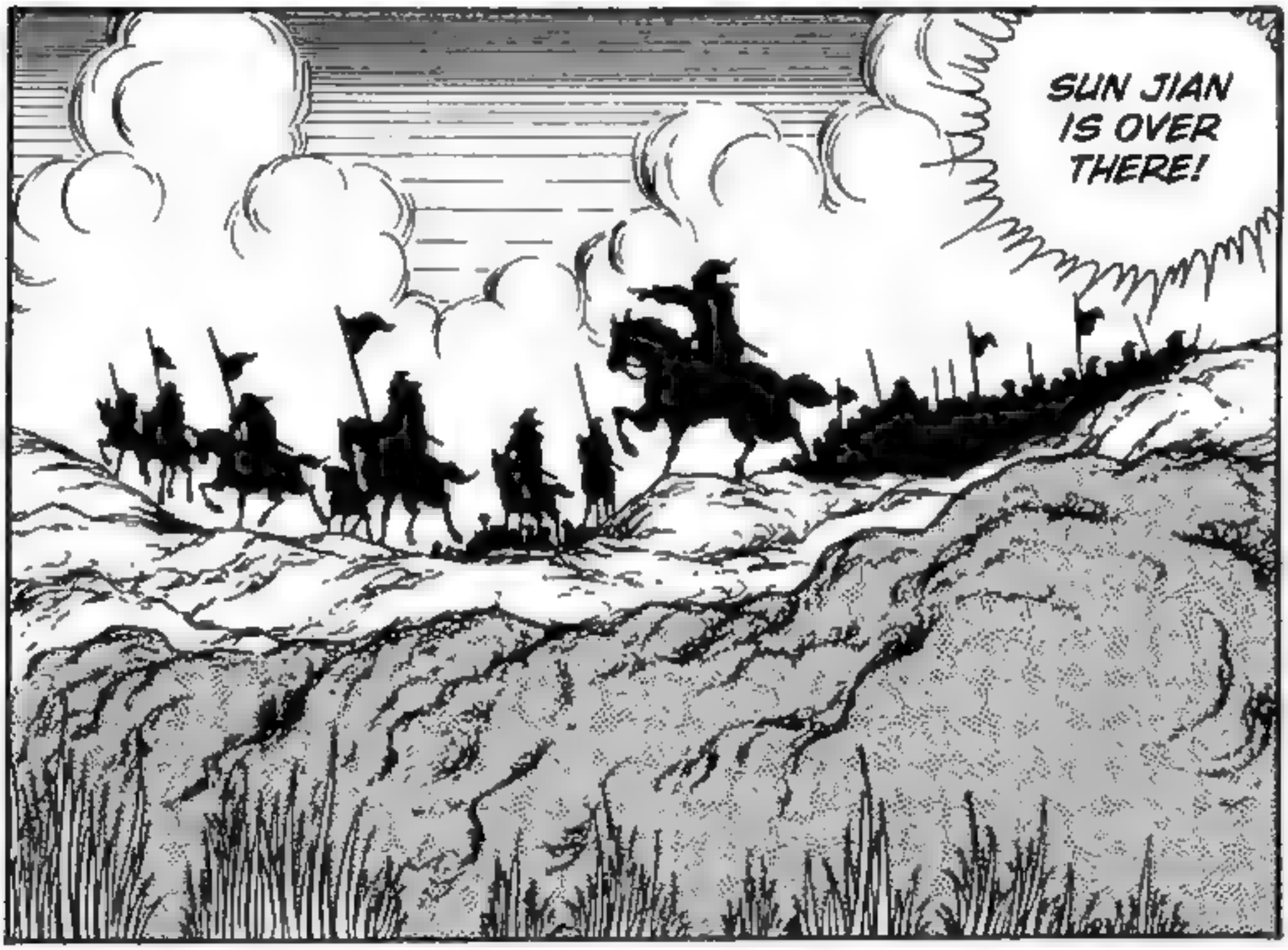
IN THAT TIME, WE WISH SIR TO SAFELY MAKE IT ACROSS THE RIVER AND ESCAPE.

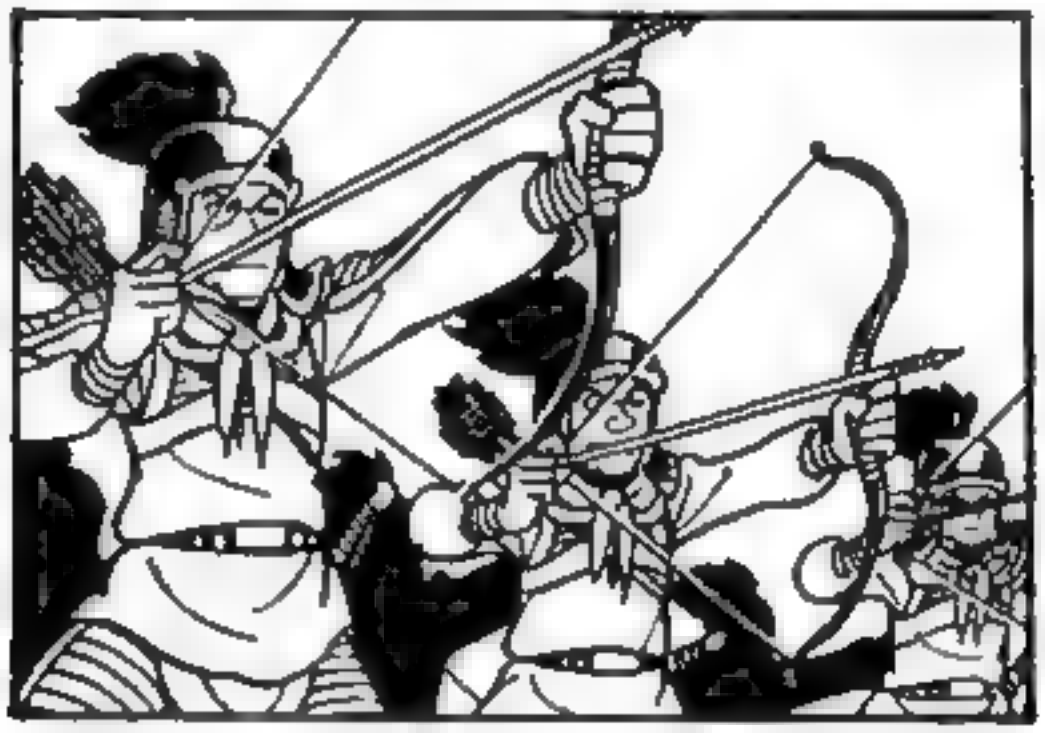
GENERAL, MAY YOU RULE THIS NATION ONE DAY.

MMHMM.
THEY'RE HERE.

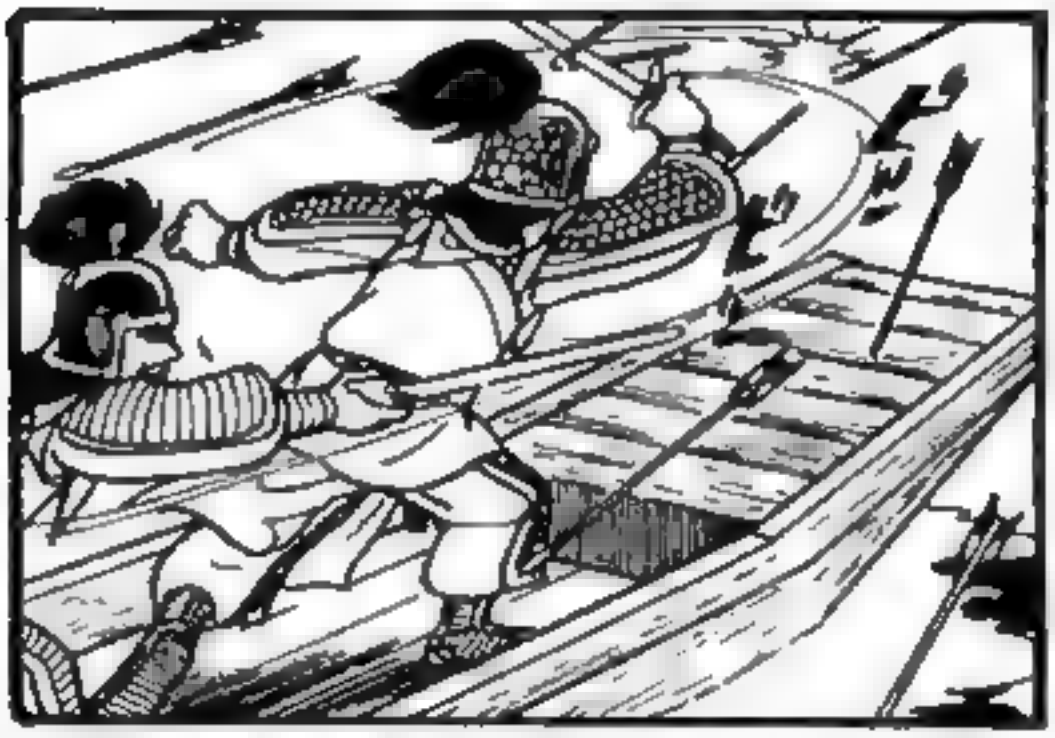


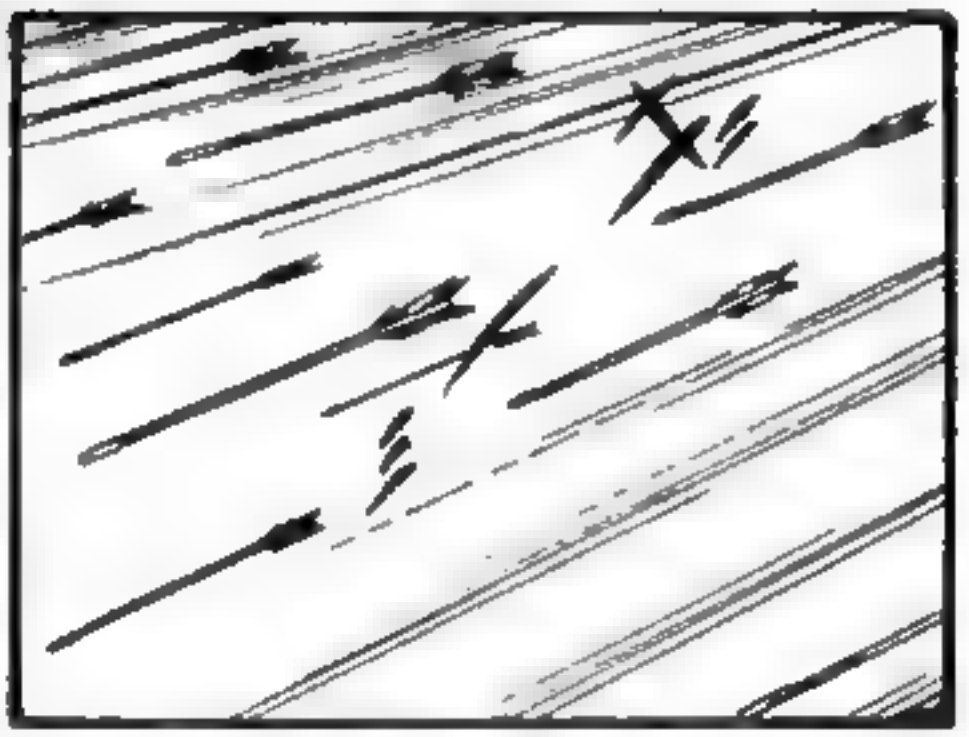


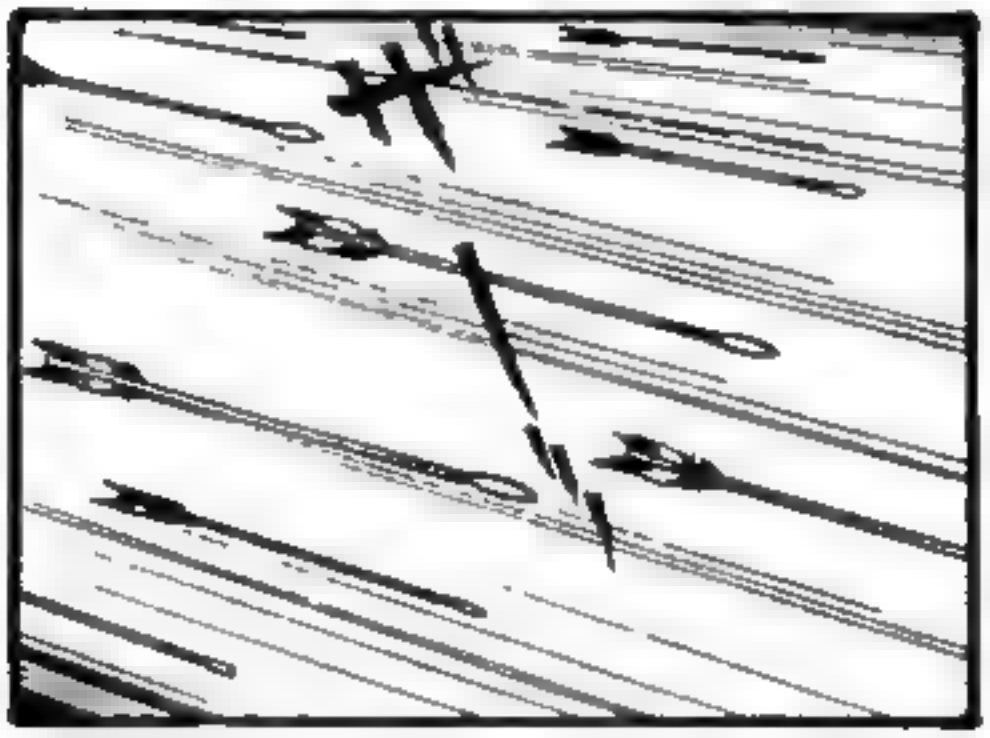

SUN JIAN IS OVER THERE!

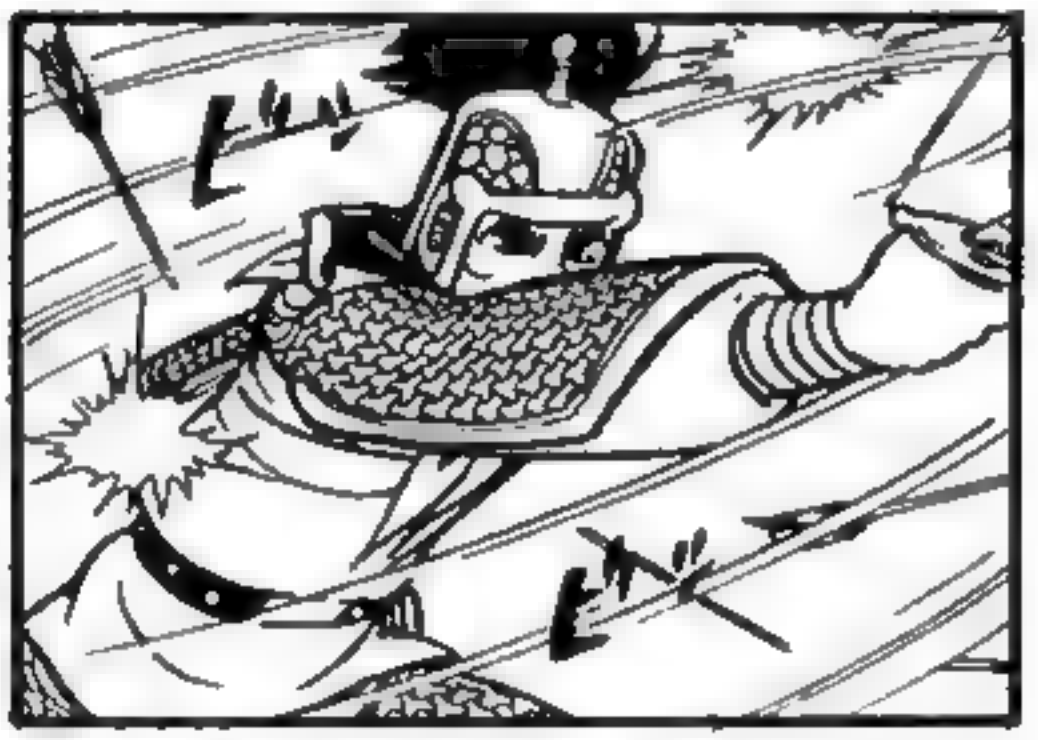


DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE! FIRE!

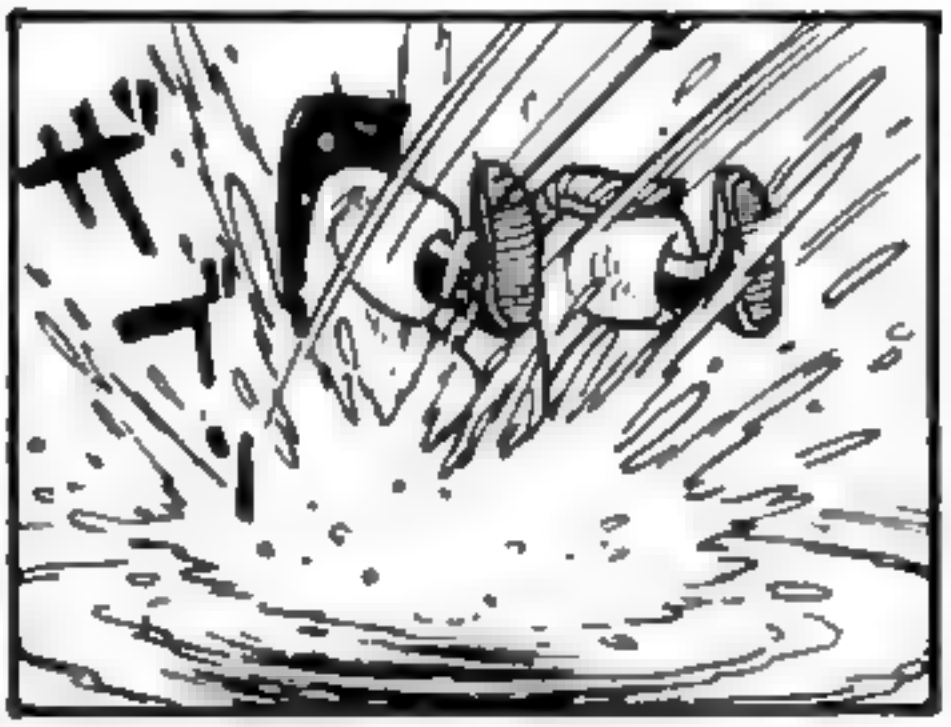






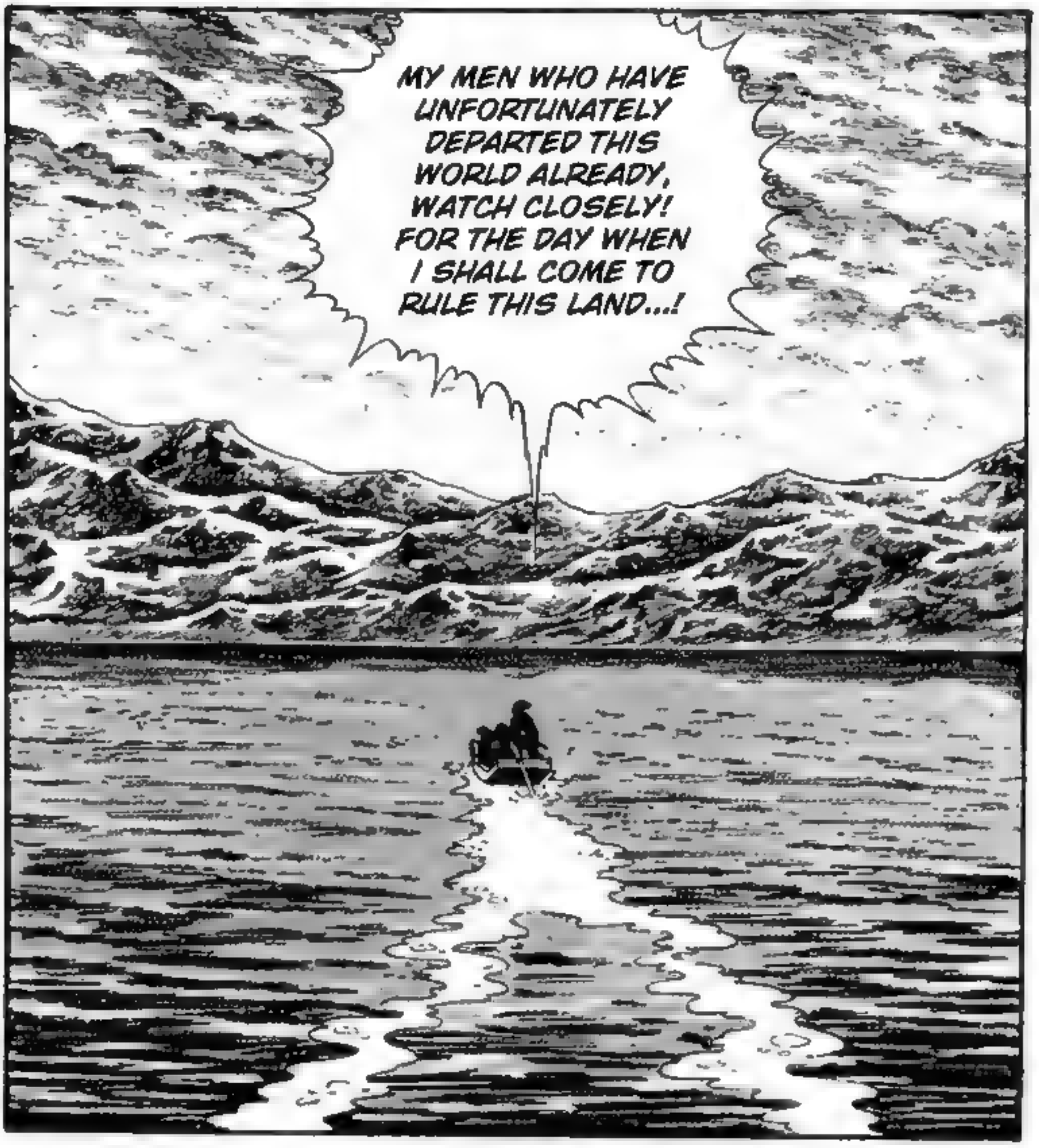


WATCH OUT, SIR!



AND THAT IS THIS IMPERIAL SEAL, THE MARK OF AN EMPEROR!

BUT THERE'S STILL ONE THING I DO HAVE LEFT...
I'VE LOST TOO MANY GOOD MEN.


MY MEN WHO HAVE UNFORTUNATELY DEPARTED THIS WORLD ALREADY, WATCH CLOSELY! FOR THE DAY WHEN I SHALL COME TO RULE THIS LAND...!

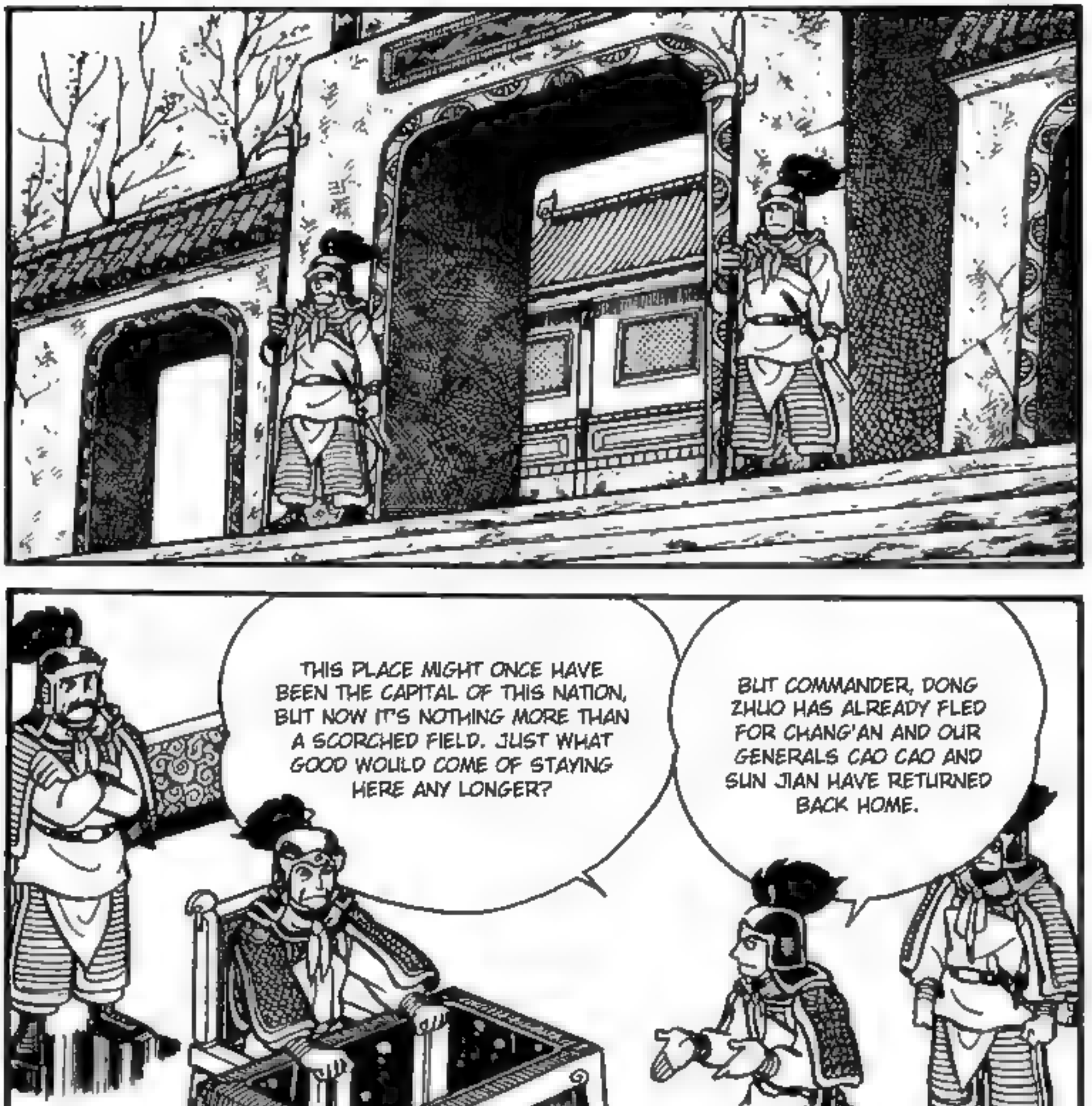
YUAN SHAO'S PLAN

I WONDER WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO US?

EVEN *CAO CAO*, THE ONE STARTED THIS UPRISING TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO, HAS RETURNED FOR HOME.

YEAH, THEY'VE BEEN DISCUSSING THE FUTURE COURSE OF PLAN FOR QUITE SOME TIME NOW.

ARE THEY STILL AT THE MEETING?


THIS PLACE MIGHT ONCE HAVE BEEN THE CAPITAL OF THIS NATION, BUT NOW IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A SCORCHED FIELD. JUST WHAT GOOD WOULD COME OF STAYING HERE ANY LONGER?
BUT COMMANDER, DONG ZHUO HAS ALREADY FLED FOR CHANG'AN AND OUR GENERALS CAO CAO AND SUN JIAN HAVE RETURNED BACK HOME.

I FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO TEMPORARILY DISBAND OUR FORCES.

BECAUSE DONG ZHUO BURNT EVERYTHING DOWN, THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO OBTAIN MORE FOOD.

OUR ARMY IS RUNNING LOW ON FOOD AND SUPPLIES, SIR.

AND AS LORDS OF VARIOUS PROVINCES, WE CANNOT LEAVE OUR HOMES FOREVER, SIR.

YES, MY SOLDIERS AS WELL. THEY'VE BEEN SINGING FOLK SONGS FROM THEIR HOMETOWN AS OF LATE.

MY SOLDIERS ARE ALL HOMESICK AND TIRED OF FIGHTING.

I SEE...

IT SEEMS THAT ALL YOU GENTLEMEN ARE OF THE OPINION THAT WE SHOULD DISBAND FOR THE TIME BEING.

VERY WELL, THEN. LET US DISBAND FOR THE TIME BEING. I THANK EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU FOR PARTICIPATING UNTIL NOW.

AND STAYING IN LUOYANG ANY LONGER WHEN WE CAN'T EVEN BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO FROM HERE WOULD BE POINTLESS.

AND AS YOU SAY, EVEN THE FOUNDER OF THIS ALLIANCE, CAO CAO, HAS LEFT FOR HOME.

FAREWELL.

LET US GATHER ONCE MORE WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT.

HOW WAS THE MEETING, SIR?

WE'VE DECIDED TO DISBAND.

AH, GOOD DAY TO YOU, XUANDE.

GOOD DAY, GENERAL GONGSUN ZAN.

YES, BUT I THINK IT MIGHT BE BETTER THIS WAY.

AS I THOUGHT ...

CONTINUING FURTHER ON MIGHT ONLY BRING MORE PROBLEMS.

OUR COMMANDER YUAN SHAO IS NOT A CAPABLE-ENOUGH MAN TO CONTINUE LEADING US.

BUT WE THREE ARE BETTER OFF WANDERING ON OUR OWN FOR NOW.

I THANK SIR FOR THE KIND OFFER.

I PROMISE TO TREAT YOU VERY WELL.

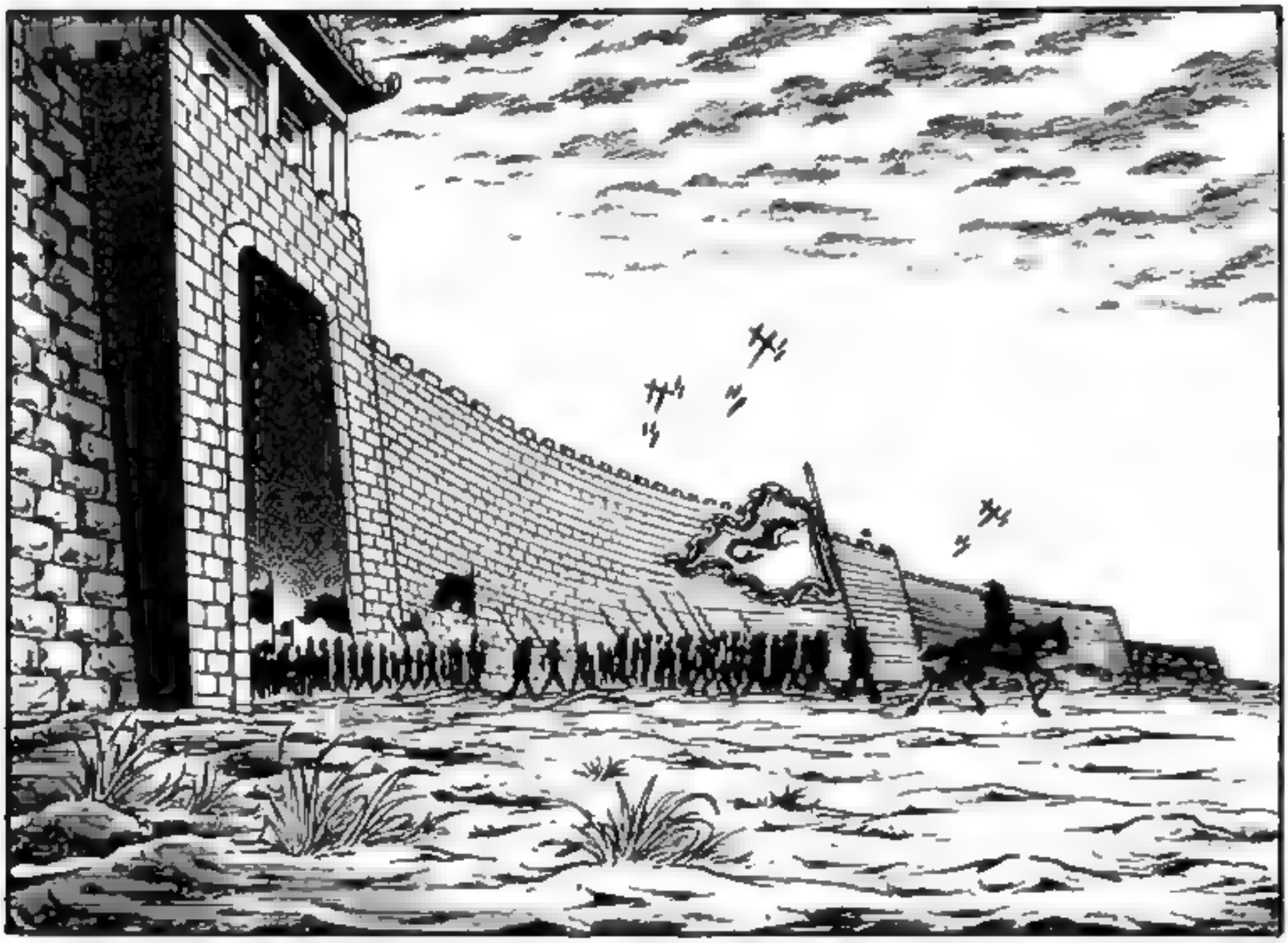
XUANDE, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME WITH ME TO BEIPING?

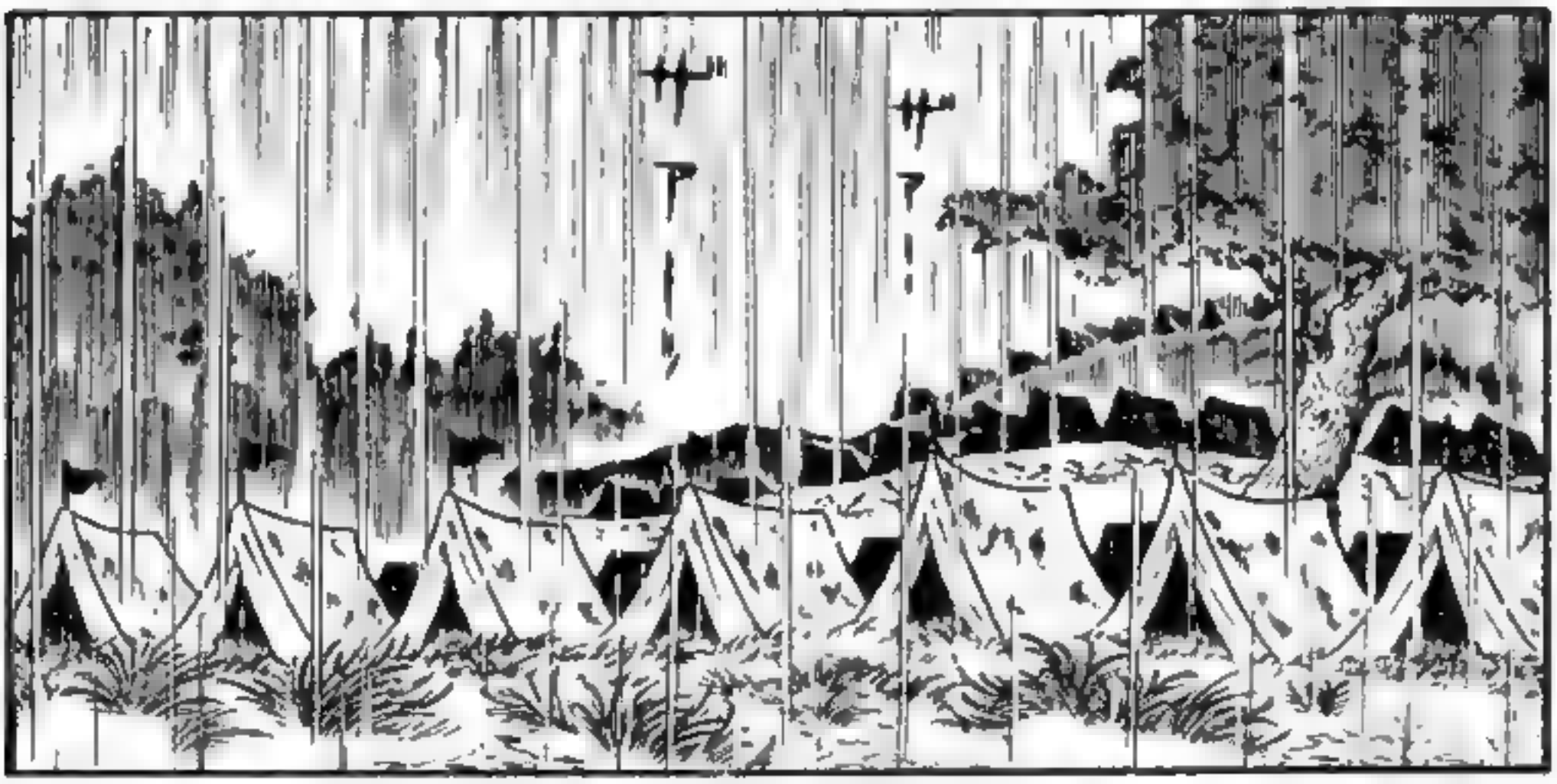
GOOD-BYE, THEN.

MAY WE MEET ONCE MORE WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT. FAREWELL, SIR.

HAHA, OF COURSE NOT BROTHER!

AND THUS OUR VAGRANT LIVES BEGIN ONCE MORE. ANY COMPLAINTS?





YOU KNOW VERY WELL THAT OUR RATIONS ARE RUNNING LOW.

IS THIS ALL?

HERE YOU GO.

ズル ズル

YOU SAID IT! I'D RATHER BE A BEGGER BEGGING FOR FOOD THAN HAVING TO EAT THIS SORRY EXCUSE FOR A MEAL.

ARE THEY SERIOUS? AS IF A GROWN MAN COULD SATISFY HIMSELF WITH THIS MEAGER MEAL!

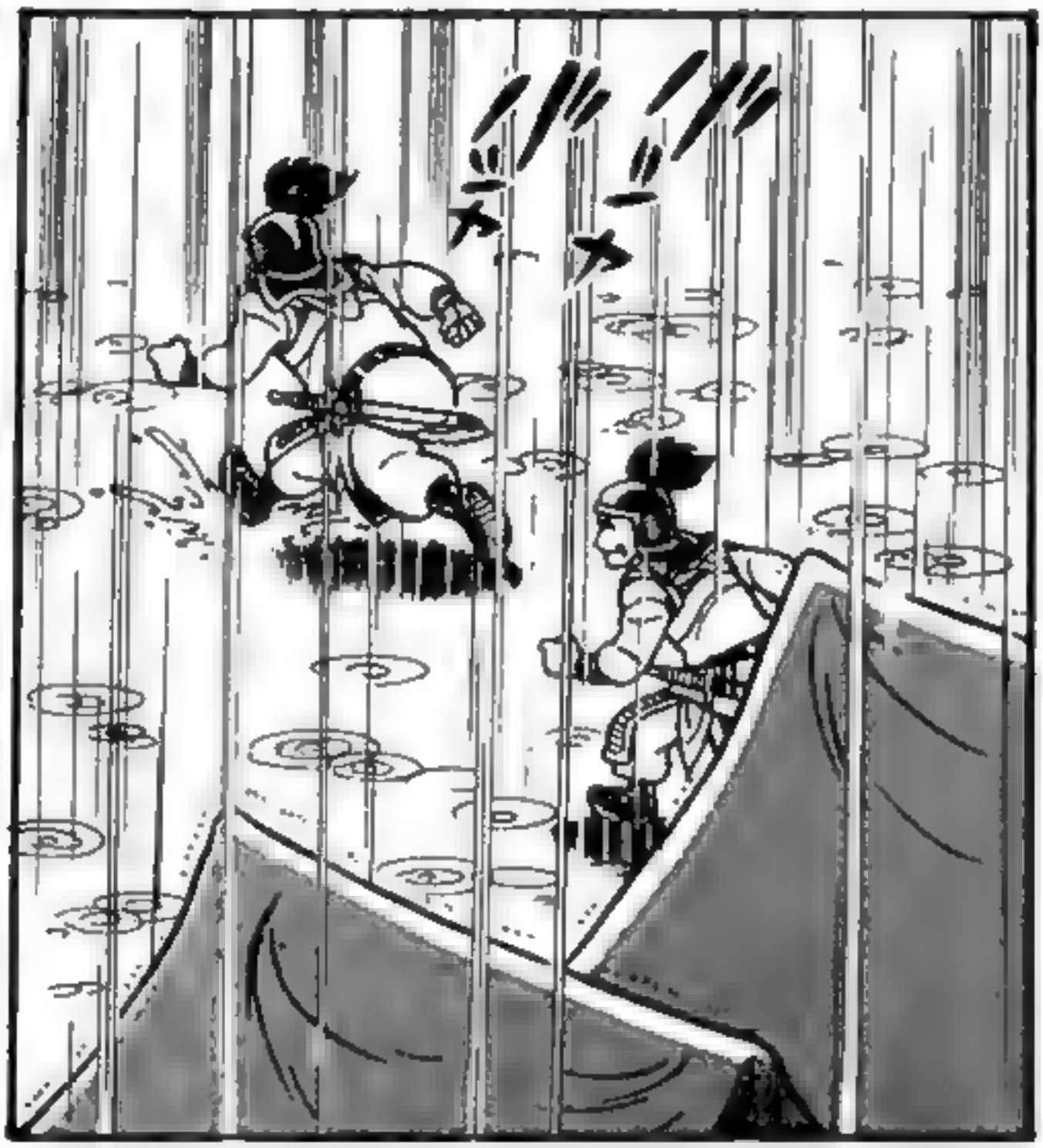
SO WE'LL DO IT SECRETLY THEN. BESIDES, WE LEAVE THIS PLACE FIRST THING TOMORROW MORNING, THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL GET CAUGHT.

YOU KNOW PILLAGING IS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH, RIGHT?

WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET SOME MORE FOOD IF WE GO THERE.

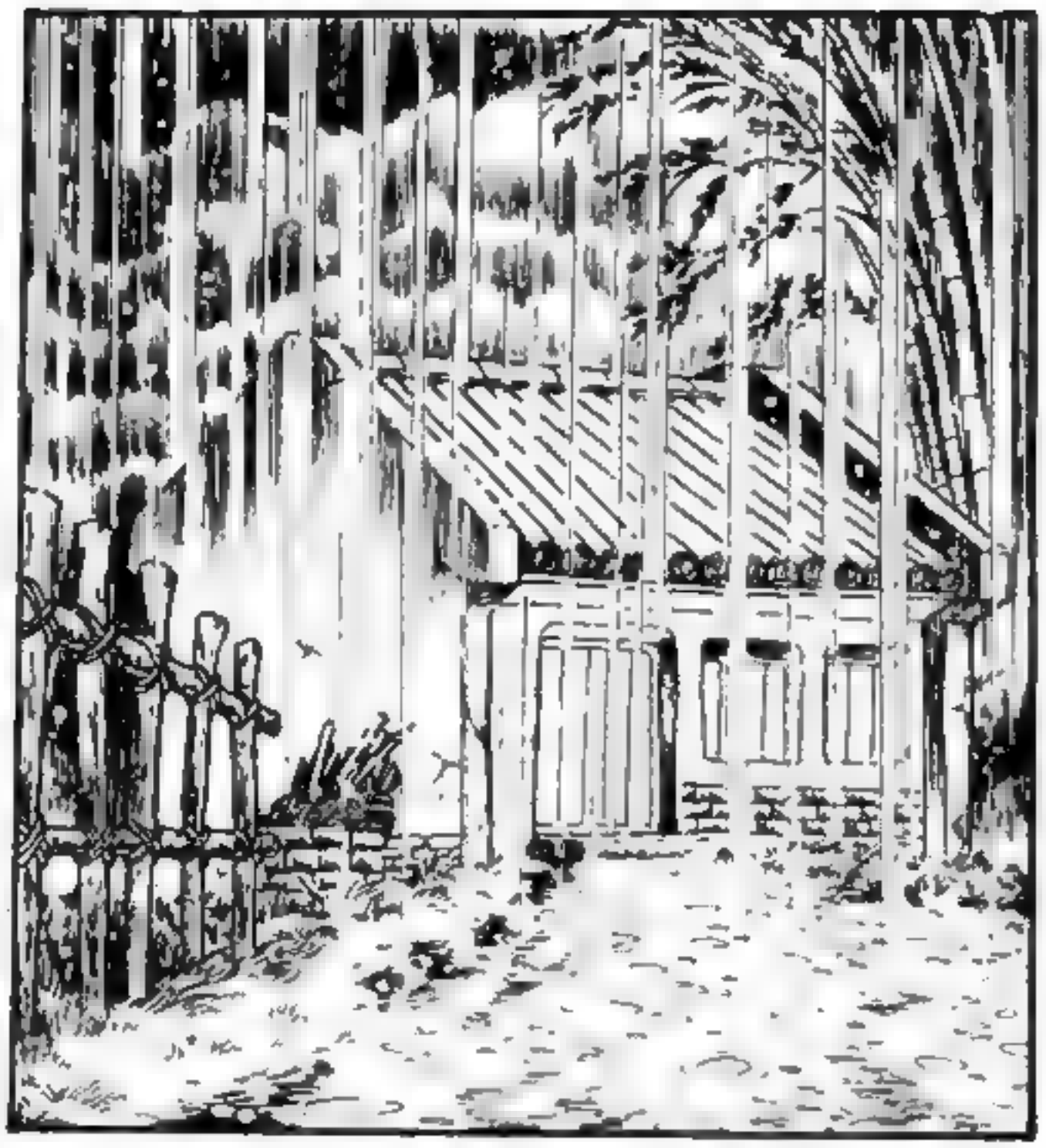
HEY, DID YA KNOW THERE'S A FAMILY LIVING CLOSEBY HERE?

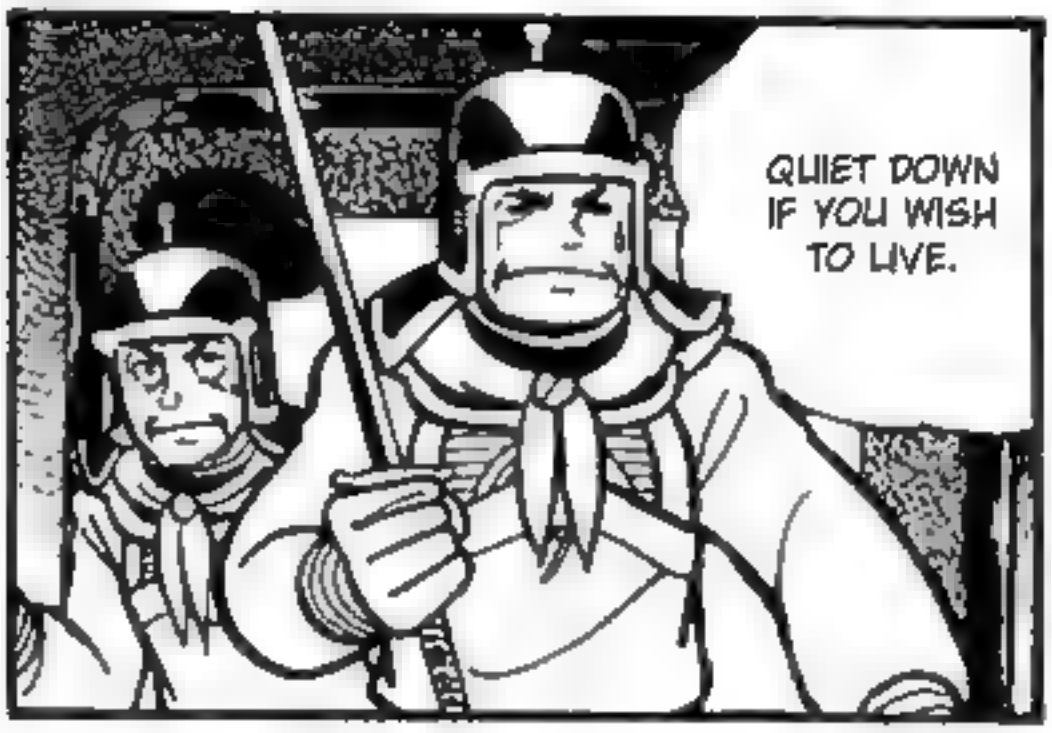
ALRIGHT, LET'S DO IT THEN.
WELL? NOT A BAD IDEA, EH?



?

THAT MUST BE IT.




QUIET DOWN IF YOU WISH TO LIVE.

KYAA!

DON'T MIND IF I DO!

WELL, WELL, WELL. WHAT HAVE WE HERE? A FEAST?

Y-YES.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, BRING US SOMETHING TO DRINK!

MAN, IS IT EVER GREAT TO STUFF OURSELVES AFTER SO LONG!

AHHHH!

HEY, HAND OVER YOUR VALUABLES.

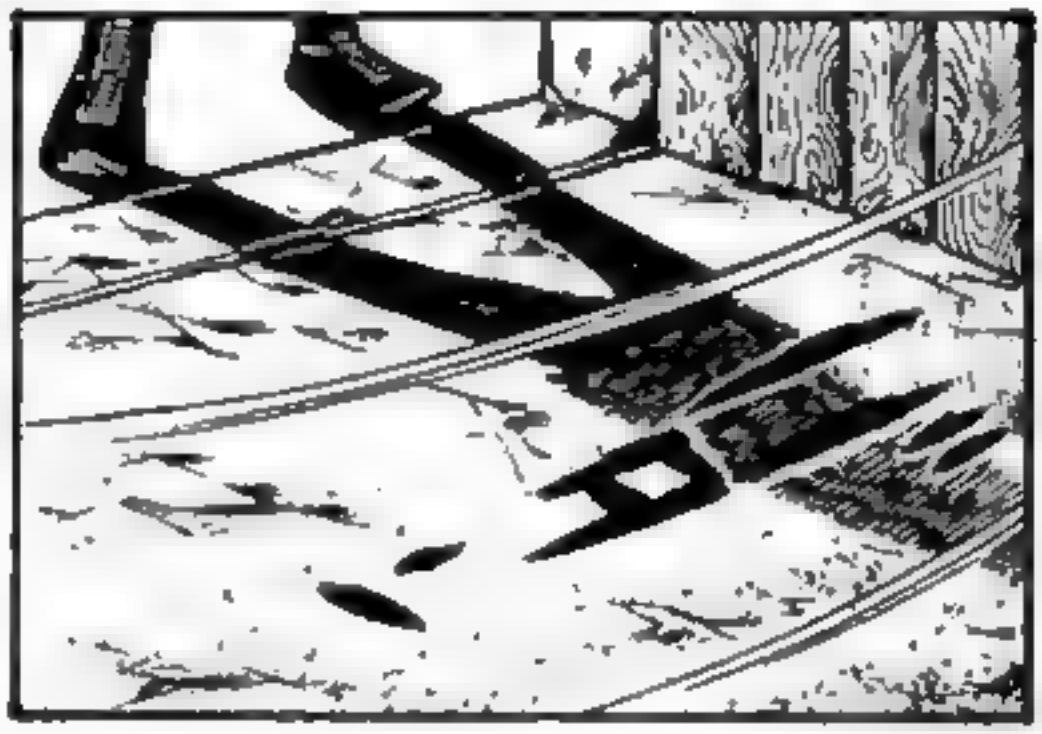
N-NO SIR!
WHAT? WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE US TAKE YOUR LIFE AND YOUR VALUABLES!?

NOW THEN...
AHH! BOY, AM I EVER FULL!

KYAAA!
COME ON, I'LL TREAT YA WELL!

HEH HEH... I THINK I'LL TAKE... THIS LADY HERE!

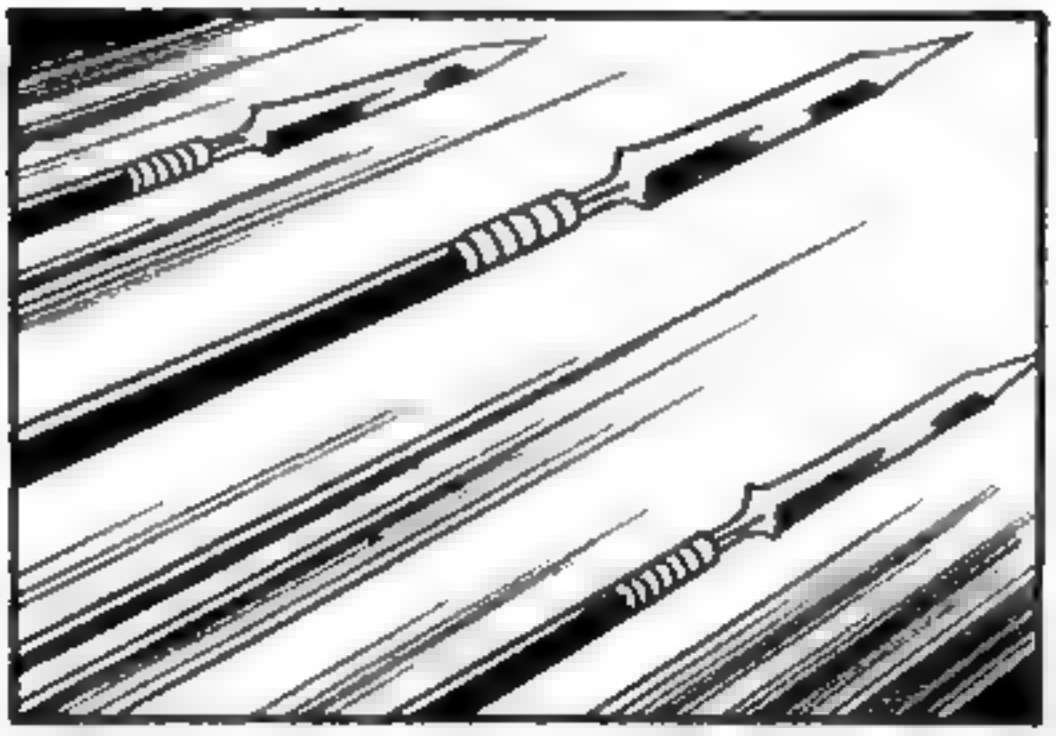
?
HMM?



AGHH!

P-PLEASE FORGIVE US SIR!

I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THAT PILLAGING IS PUN-ISHABLE BY DEATH, RIGHT!?



EXECUTE THEM!

AGHH!

MY APOLOGIES, SIR.

ACK!

MEN, CARRY THE BODIES OUT.

I HOPE THAT THESE TWO VERMIN WILL NOT CAUSE YOU TO LOSE FAITH IN OUR ENTIRE ARMY.

BUT THINGS WILL TURN VERY BAD FOR US AT THIS RATE.

I FEAR THAT THE STARVED SOLDIERS WILL EITHER ABANDON OUR ARMY OR BEGIN PILLAGING CITIZENS.

WE'RE AT A LOSS, SIR. IT'S NOT AS IF WE'RE FEEDING ONE OR TWO HUNDRED, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT FEEDING THE MOUTHS OF THOUSANDS...

SO HOW CAN WE OBTAIN MORE FOOD SUPPLIES?

AS ACCORDING TO OUR MILITARY LAW, WE EXECUTED THEM, SIR.

AND HOW DID YOU DEAL WITH THEM?

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH SIR, WE CAUGHT TWO OF OUR SOLDIERS STEALING FOOD FROM A NEARBY HOME.

HOW ABOUT ASKING HAN FU, THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU, FOR HELP SIR?

HMM...

YES, SIR.

TO THINK THAT MEN WHO ONCE ROSE UP FOR JUSTICE WILL NOW BE VIEWED AS NOTHING BUT THIEVES... THE SITUATION IS DIRE INDEED.

A MAN OF SIR'S STATURE NEED NOT TO LOWER HIS HEAD AND BEG FOR FOOD FROM HAN FU.

WAIT, SIR!

THE LAND OF JIZHOU IS BOUNTIFUL. CONQUERING JIZHOU WOULD BE GREATLY BENEFICIAL TO SIR'S FUTURE.

DO YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE A BETTER IDEA THEN?

BUT THEN THE QUESTION IS HOW TO TAKE OVER JIZHOU...

BENEFICIAL FOR THE FUTURE, EH?

I SEE...

TELL HIM TO ASSIST IN THE TAKING OVER OF JIZHOU AND SIR WILL GLADLY SHARE HALF OF THE CONQUERED LAND. GONGSUN ZAN IS WELL AWARE OF JIZHOU'S RICH LAND AND WILL SURELY AGREE.

I HAVE A GOOD PLAN, SIR.

FIRST, LET US SECRETLY SEND A MESSENGER TO GONGSUN ZAN, GOVERNOR OF BEIPING.

REPORT TO HAN FU THAT GONGSUN ZAN IS PLANNING TO ATTACK JIZHOU AND OFFER TO HELP PROTECT HIM.

?

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, SIR MUST ALSO SECRETLY SEND A MESSENGER TO JIZHOU.

I SEE, AN INGENIUS PLAN, I SAY!

AND THEN SIR CAN RULE OVER JIZHOU ANY WAY SIR DESIRES.

BEING A COWARD, HAN FU WILL SURELY ACCEPT SIR'S HELP.

ALRIGHT THEN, LET ME WRITE THE LETTERS AT ONCE.

JIZHOU

OH MY, THIS IS TERRIBLE NEWS!

MY LORD, GENERAL YUAN SHAO HAS SENT A MESSAGE.

WHAT!?

IT SEEMS THAT GONGSUN ZAN, GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, IS PLANNING TO ATTACK US!

WHY, ISN'T THIS YUAN SHAO THE SAME FELLOW WHO LED THAT HUGE ARMY TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO?

BUT GENERAL YUAN SHAO OFFERS TO HELP PROTECT US IF WE DESIRE SO.

YES, MY LORD. IF WE DON'T ASK GENERAL YUAN SHAO TO HELP US, WE'LL SURELY BE CONQUERED BY GONGSUN ZAN!

THEN HOW FORTUNATE WE ARE, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE LACK THE FORCES TO FEND OFF GONGSUN ZAN.

AND WHY IS THAT, GENG WU?

PLEASE WAIT, MY LORD! I OBJECT TO ASKING YUAN SHAO FOR HELP!

IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT WITH YUAN SHAO'S HELP, WE'LL BE ABLE TO FEND OFF GONGSUN ZAN.

PLEASE THINK OF WHAT HAPPENED TO LUOYANG WHEN GENERAL HE JIN ASKED DONG ZHUO TO HELP HIM REMOVE THE TEN ATTENDANTS!

BUT ONCE YUAN SHAO AND HIS ARMY MARCHES INTO JIZHOU, HOW LONG DOES MY LORD SUPPOSE HE'LL STAY AS OUR ALLIES?

MY LORD, WE MUST NEVER ALLOW SOLDIERS OF ANOTHER REGION TO ENTER OUR LANDS!

YES, YES. IF THAT WERE THE CASE, THEN WHY WOULD HE SEND THIS LETTER IN THE FIRST PLACE?

GENG WU, YOU'RE OVERTHINKING THINGS!

GENTLE-MEN, PLEASE QUIET DOWN!

I WILL AGREE TO THE MAJORITY OPINION AND ASK YUAN SHAO FOR HELP.

EXACTLY! DO YOU EVEN HAVE ANY CONFIDENCE THAT WE CAN FEND OFF GONGSUN ZAN'S ARMY!?

GENG WU, THAT'S FOOLISH THINKING!

HOW COULD YOU THINK ILL OF YUAN SHAO WHO WARNED US AND EVEN OFFERED TO HELP OUT OF HIS GOOD WILL!?

SILENCE, I WISH TO HEAR NO MORE!

MY LORD!!

.....

YES, MY LORD.

SEND THIS MESSAGE TO YUAN SHAO QUICKLY.

NOW WE CAN CONQUER JIZHOU...

WITHOUT SPILLING A DROP OF BLOOD!

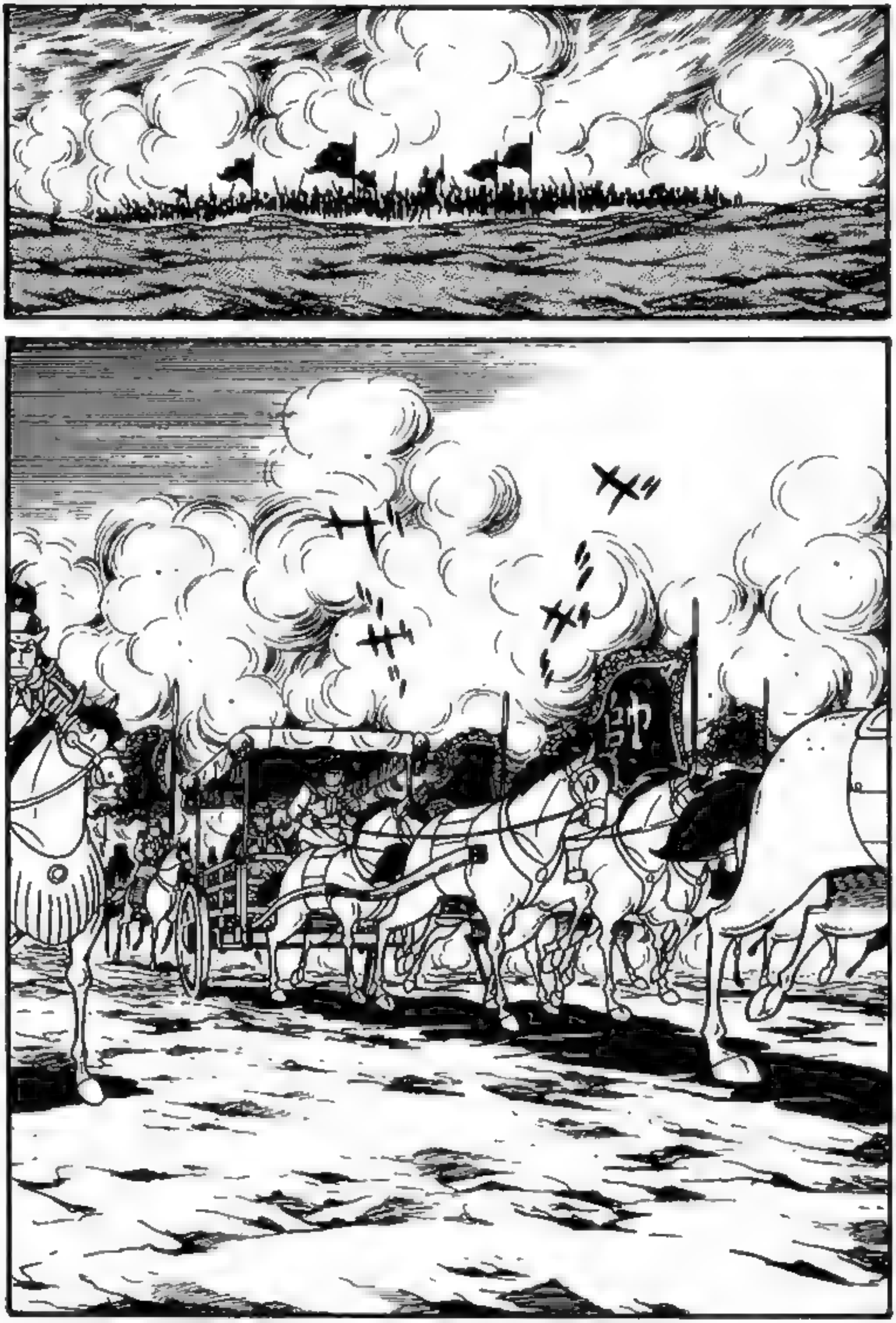
THEY HAVE ASKED FOR OUR HELP AS WE THOUGHT.

GENERAL, THE LETTER FROM JIZHOU HAS ARRIVED.

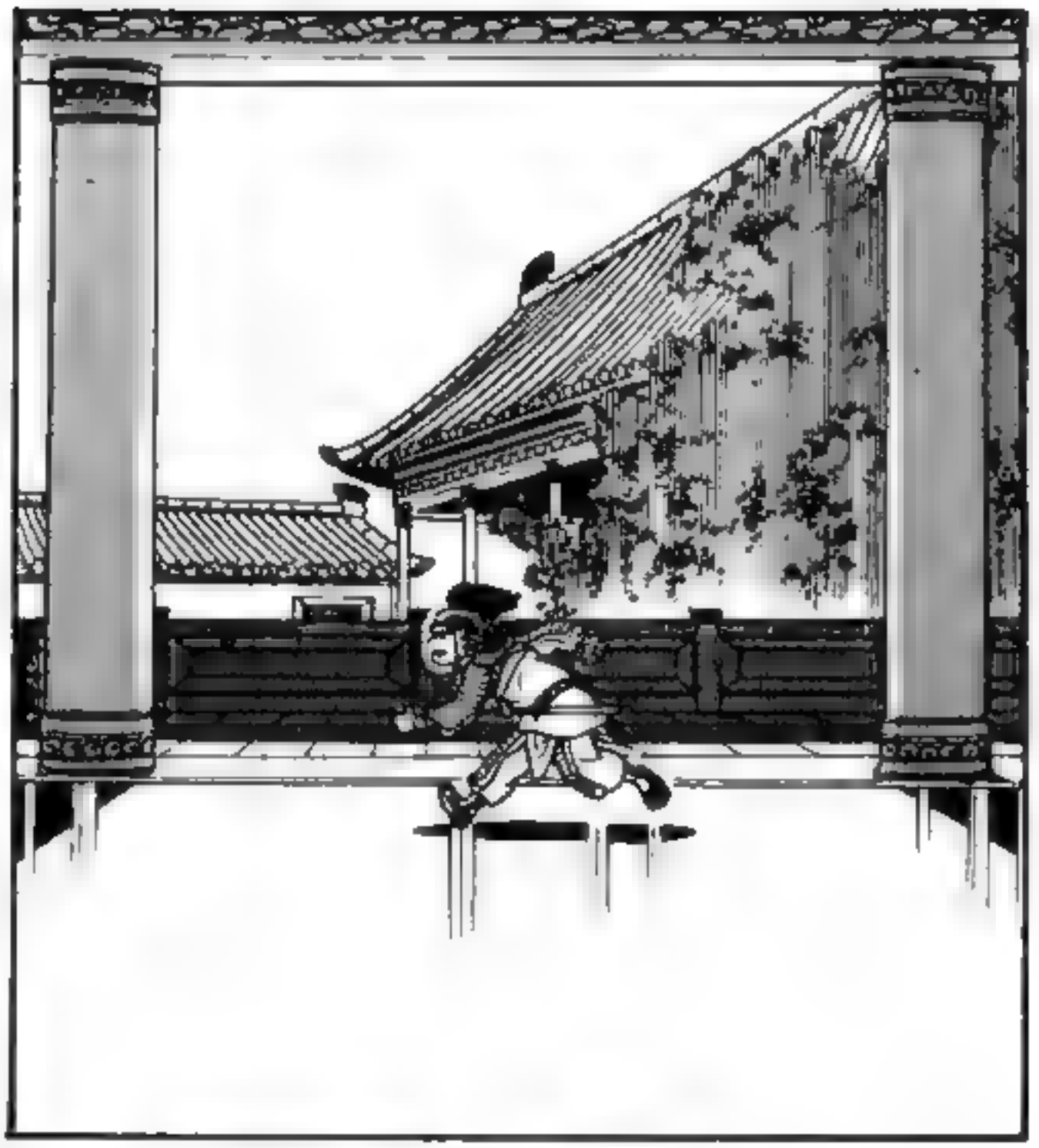
AH HA HA HA!

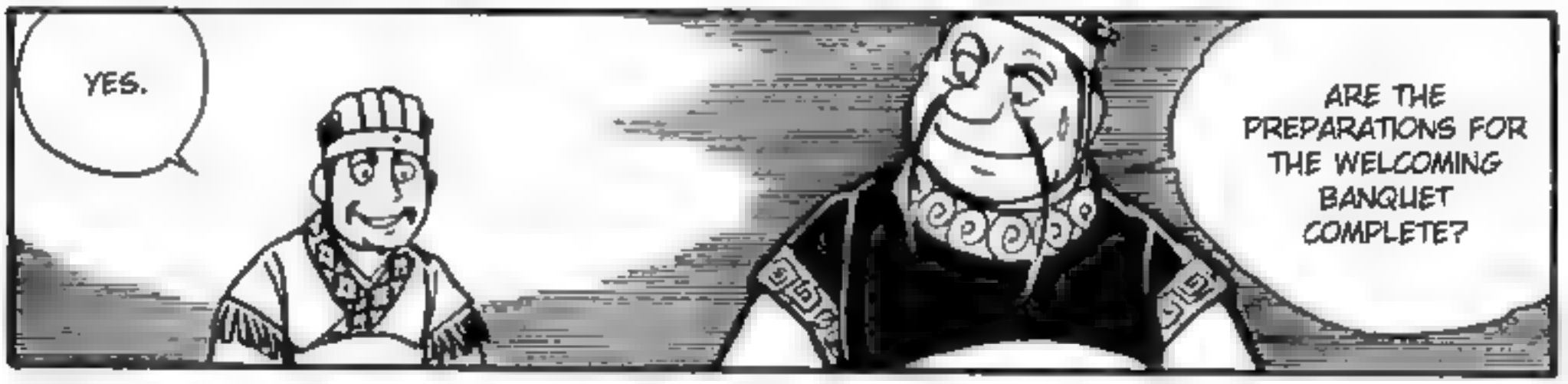
HA HA HA HA HA

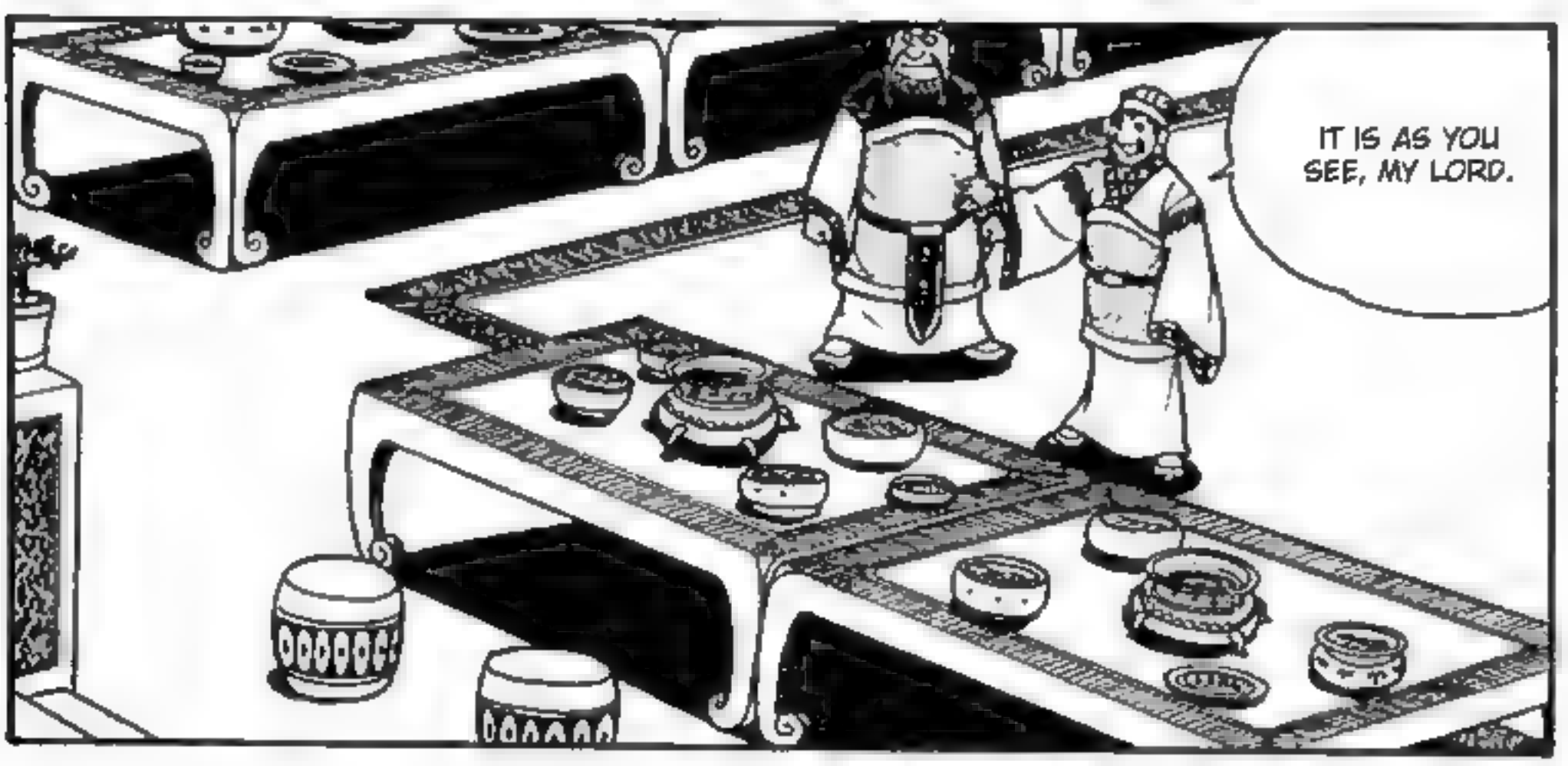
HA HA HA HA

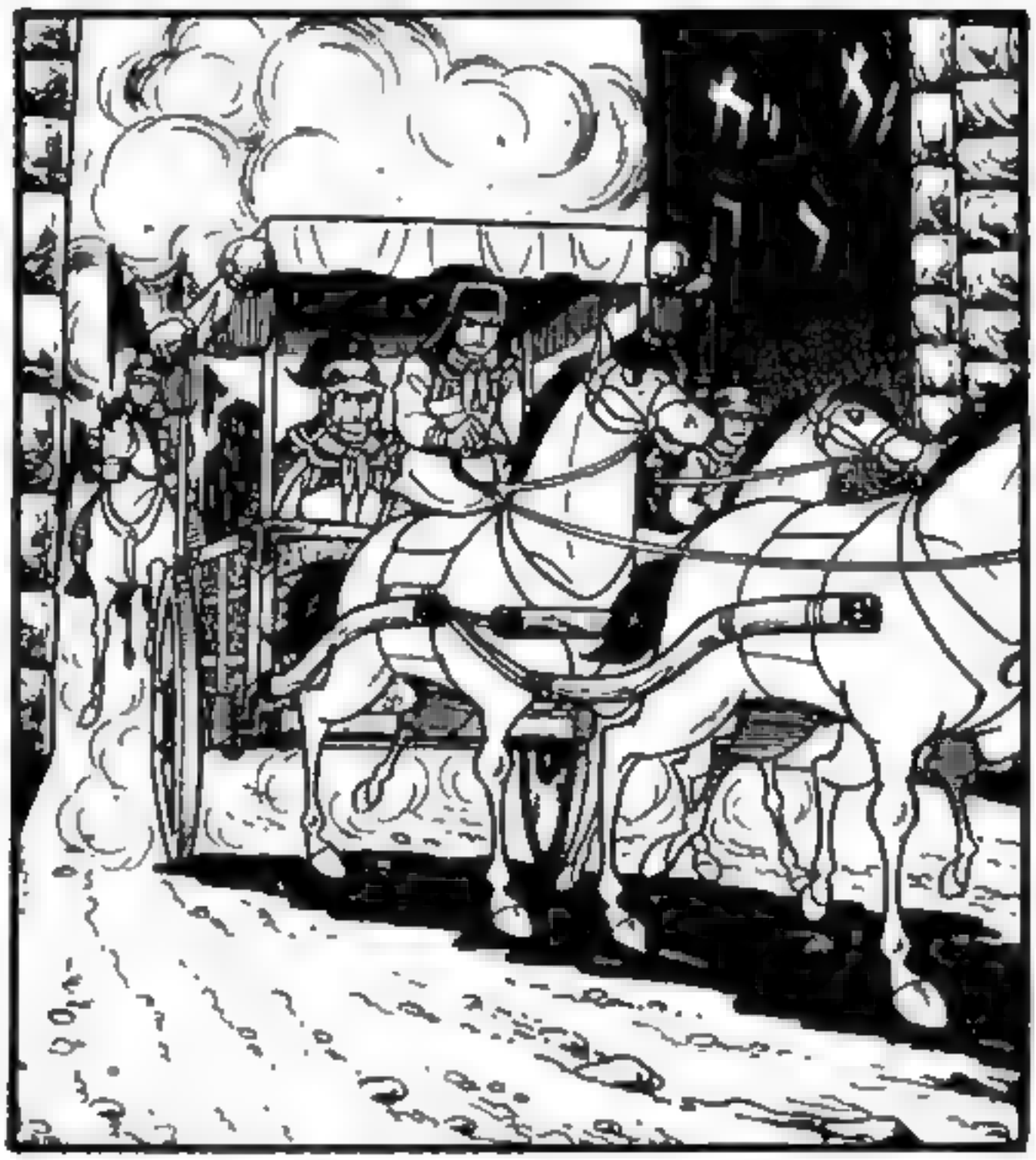


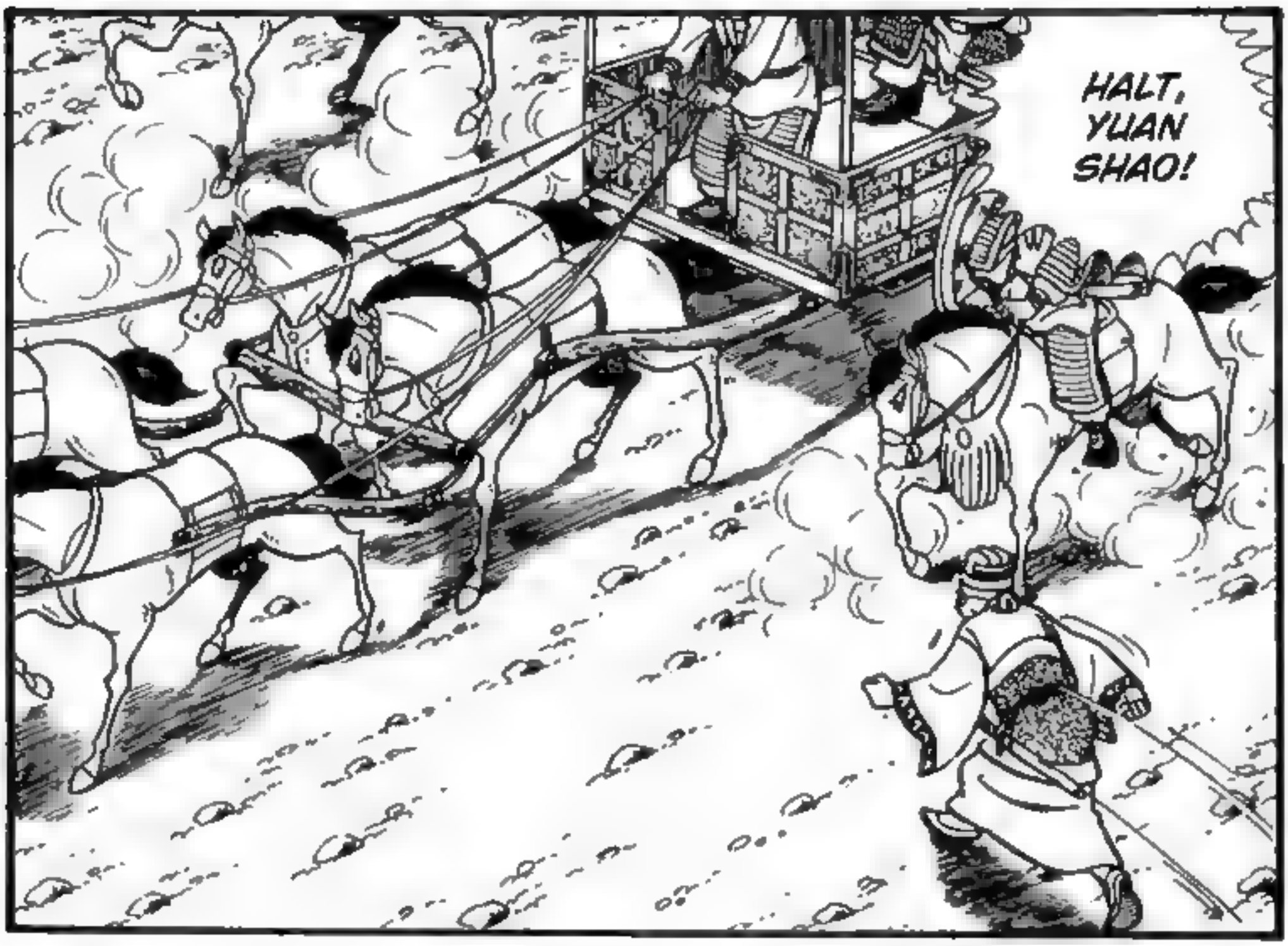
MY LORD, YUAN SHAO IS NEARING OUR CASTLE!
AH, IS THAT SO?



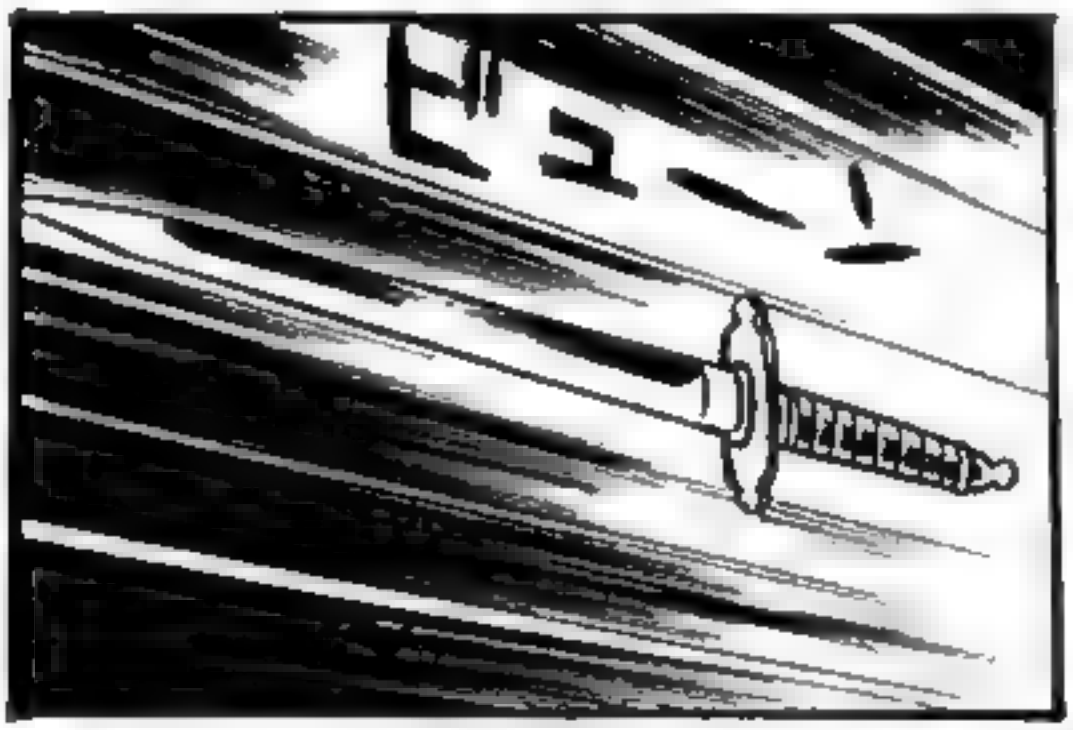

YES.
ARE THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WELCOMING BANQUET COMPLETE?


IT IS AS YOU SEE, MY LORD.

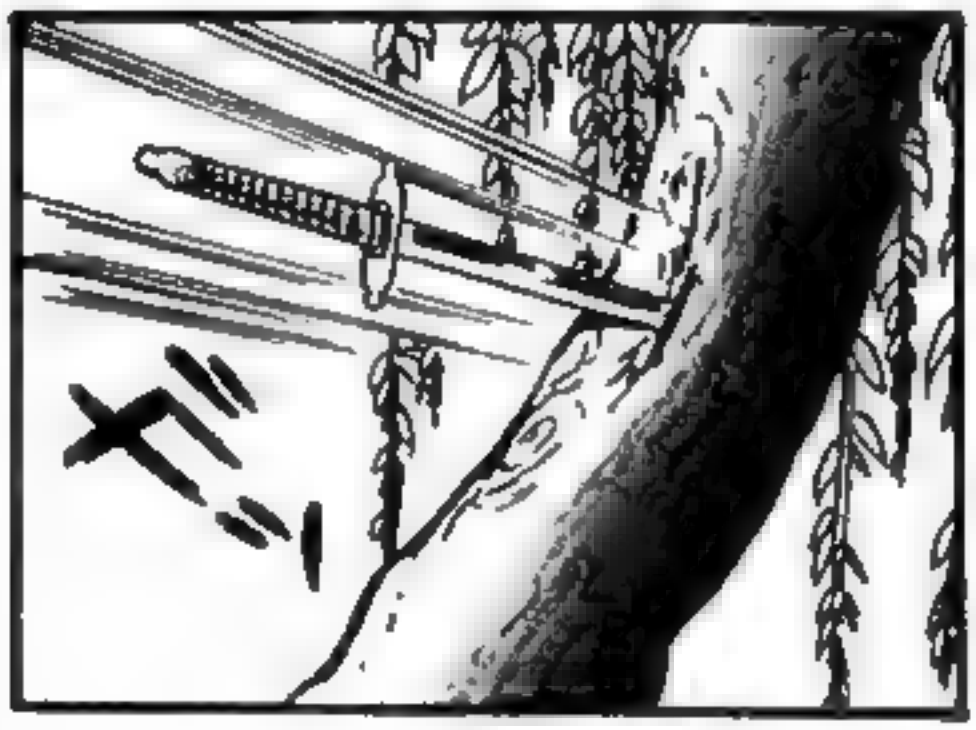



HALT, YUAN SHAO!

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SCHEM-ING! I WON'T LET YOU ENTER JIZHOU!



NGHH!

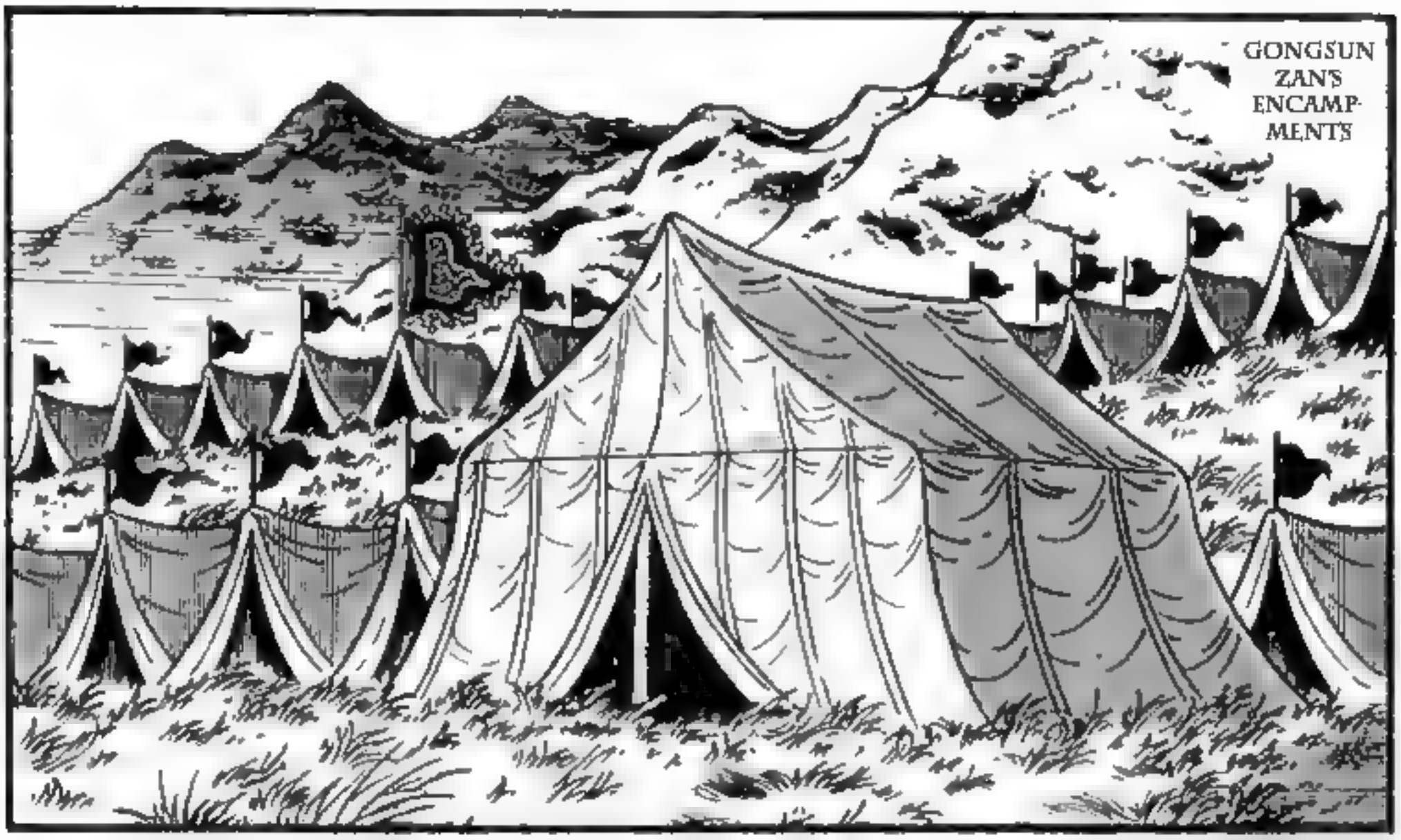


MY... LORD...

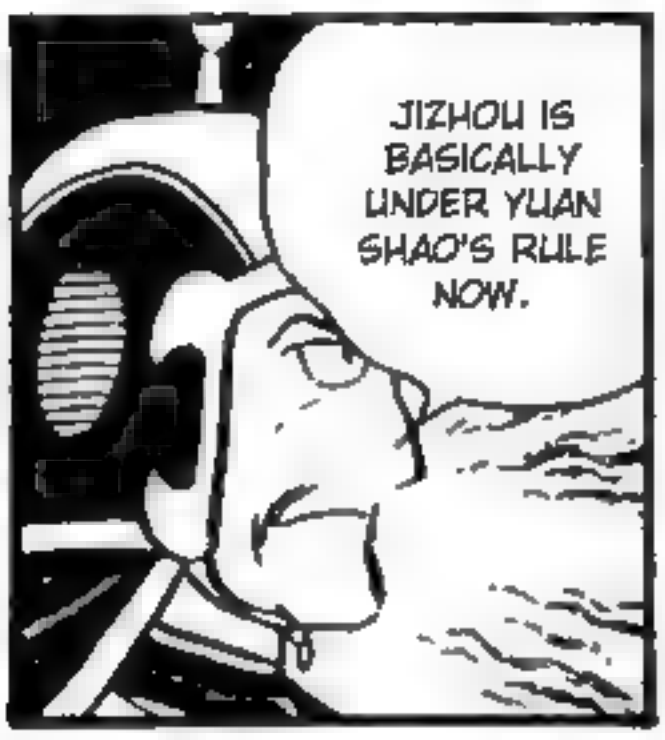
JIZHOU... WILL BE LOST...TO YUAN SHAO...!

YOU IMPU-DENT OLD MAN!

BATTLE OF PAN RIVER



AND SINCE ENTERING JIZHOU, YUAN SHAO HAS STRIPPED THE FORMER JIZHOU MINISTERS OF THEIR POSTS AND GIVEN ALL THE POWER TO HIM AND HIS MEN FOR THE "GOOD OF JIZHOU."



HAN FU HAS LEFT A SINGLE NOTE READING "I WAS MISTAKEN," AND FLED TO ZHANG MIAO, GOVERNOR OF CHENLIU.

THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO JIZHOU'S REAL GOVERNOR, HAN FU?

I THOUGHT YUAN SHAO WANTED TO ATTACK JIZHOU TOGETHER AND SHARE IT...

HMM... SO THEN WHAT IS TO COME OF THIS PROPOSAL?

IT IS AS YOU SAY, SIR.

THAT'S WHY I'VE COME THIS FAR AND MADE ENCAMPMENTS OUT HERE.

I WANT YOU TO GO TO JIZHOU AND ASK YUAN SHAO WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR PROMISE.

RIGHT AWAY, BROTHER.

WHAT IS IT, BROTHER?

GONGSUN YUE.

WELL, TREAT HIM TO A DRINK FOR NOW AND HAVE HIM WAIT.

YES, SIR.

YES, SIR. WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH HIM?

GONGSUN ZAN HAS SENT HIS LITTLE BROTHER AS A MESSENGER?

YOU CALLED, SIR?

AND... WHISPER WHISPER

YES. IT SEEMS GONGSUN ZAN'S YOUNGER BROTHER, GONGSUN YUE HAS COME TO JIZHOU.

YES, DO AS THE LADIES SAY AND DON'T HOLD BACK.

OH PLEASE, GENERAL. I'M SURE A LITTLE MORE COULDN'T HURT.
I'M AFRAID I'VE DRUNK ENOUGH ALREADY. ANY MORE AND I WOULDN'T BE SOBER ENOUGH TO MEET WITH GENERAL YUAN SHAO.

YES, YES, LET'S SKIP THE FORMALITIES, SHALL WE?

A PLEASURE TO MAKE SIR'S ACQUAINTANCE. I AM GONGSUN YUE.

BUT SPLITTING THE LAND OF JIZHOU IN HALF IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE.

YES, I SUSPECTED AS MUCH.

VERY WELL, SIR. I'VE COME TO ACQUIRE ON MY BROTHER'S BEHALF OF WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR PROMISE ABOUT JIZHOU.

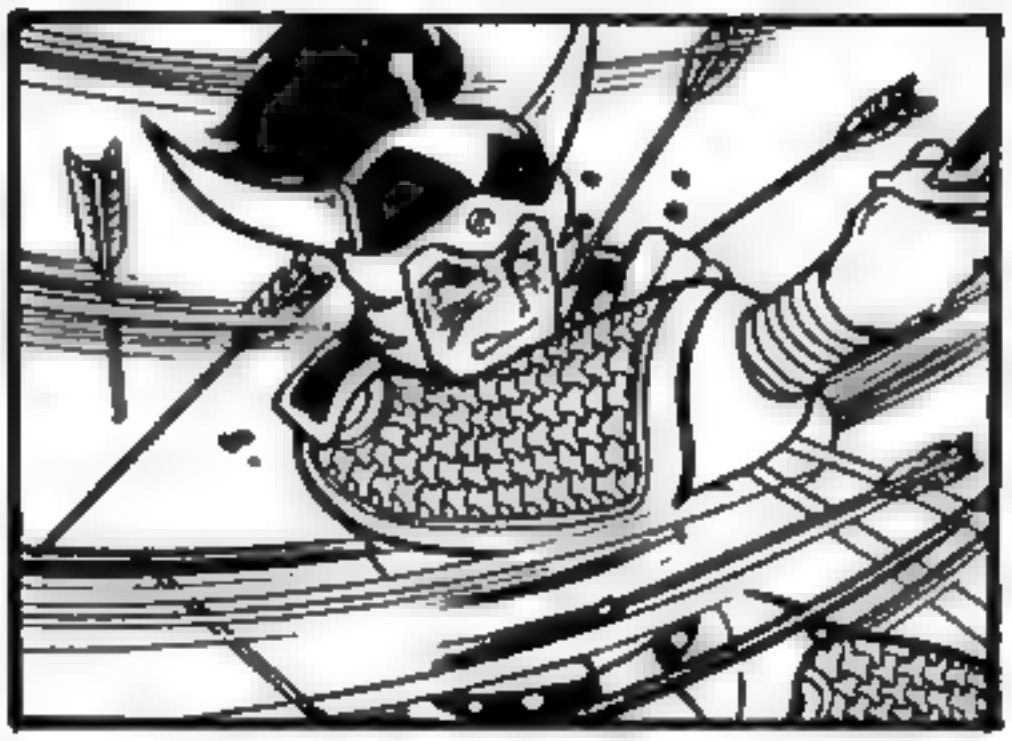
COULD YOU TELL YOUR BROTHER TO COME HERE PERSONALLY? I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH HIM.

THANK YOU.

UNDERSTOOD, I SHALL REPORT TO HIM RIGHT AWAY, SIR.

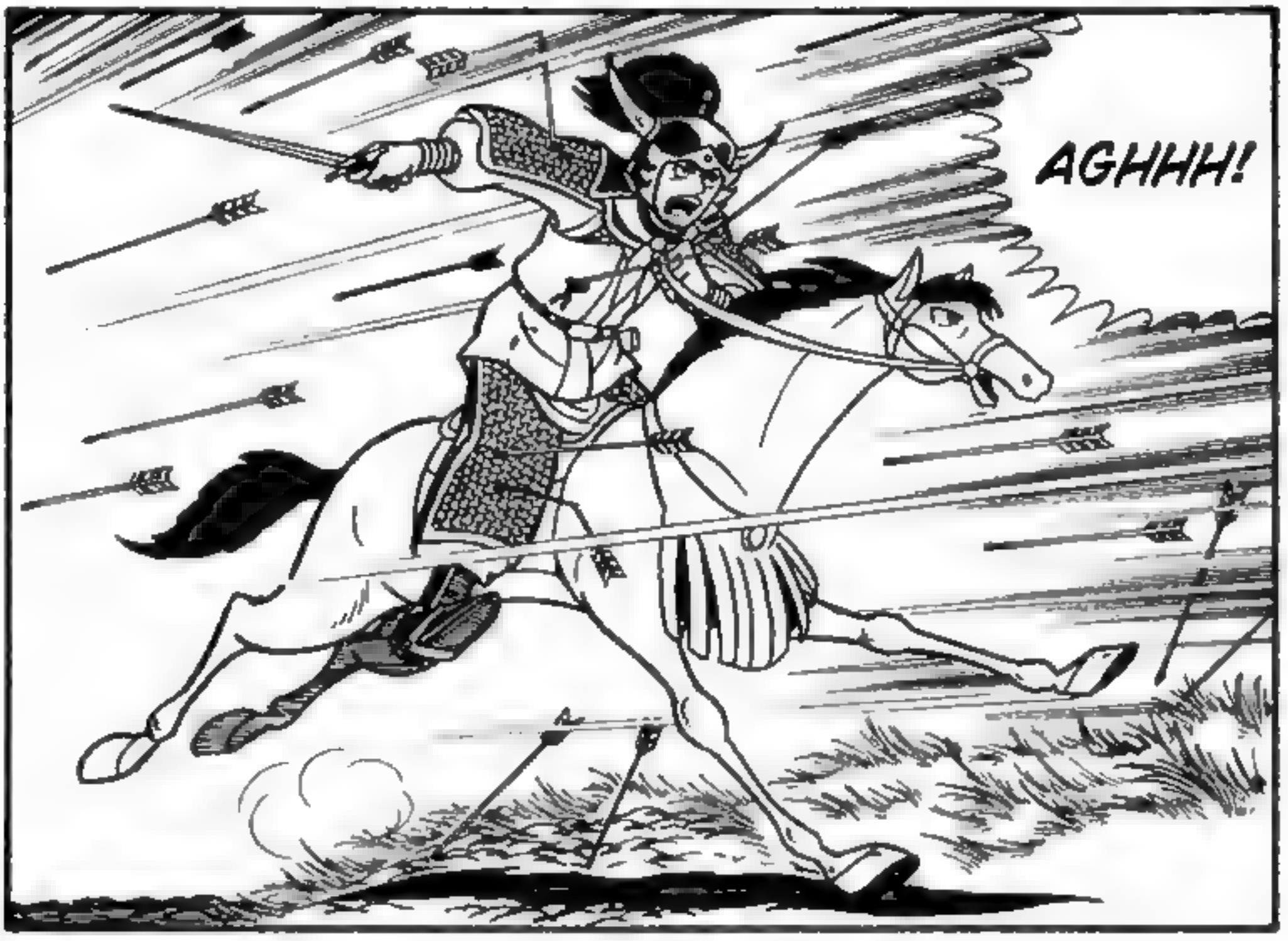
AHH, I'VE GOTTEN MYSELF COMPLTELY DRUNK...! HAHA.

BUT THAT YUAN SHAO IS A BETTER MAN THAN I THOUGHT...



ARE YOU SERIOUSLY PLANNING TO ASSASSINATE ME, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT I AM GONGSUN YUE!?

GUH!


AGHHH!

HA
HA
HA!

WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME!?

UGH...

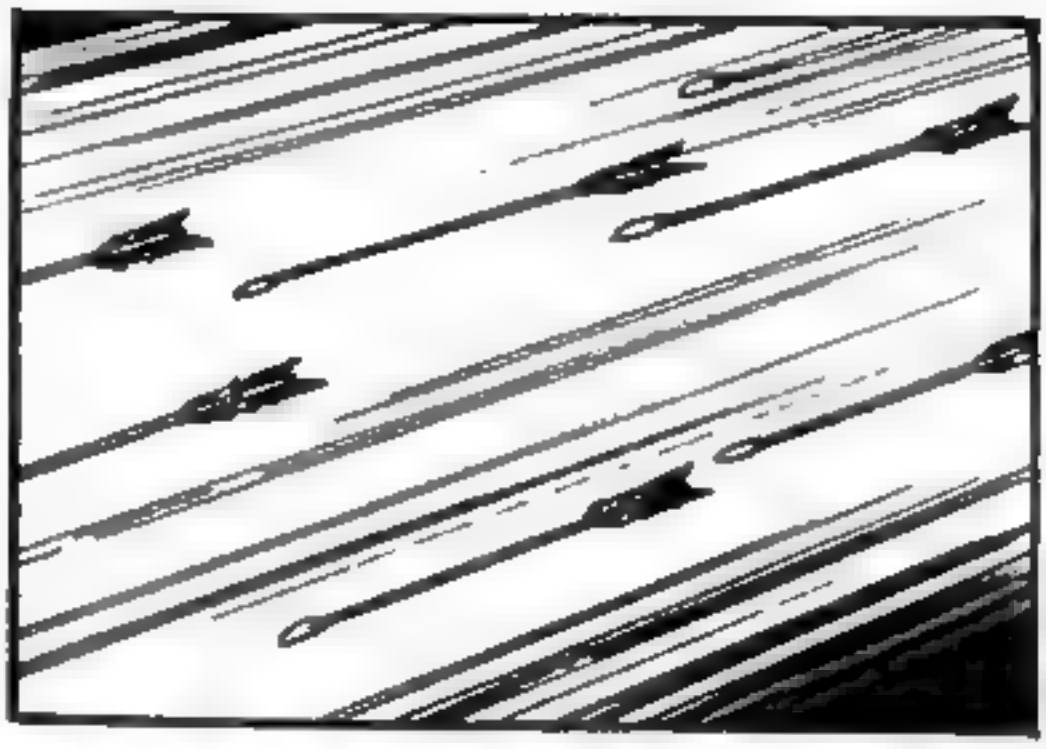
HE TRICKED ME...!?

THAT IS WHAT YUAN SHAO THINKS OF HIS PROMISE WITH YOUR BROTHER.
JUST WHY MUST JIZHOU BE DIVIDED IN HALF AFTER ALL THE EFFORTS TAKEN TO SEIZE IT?

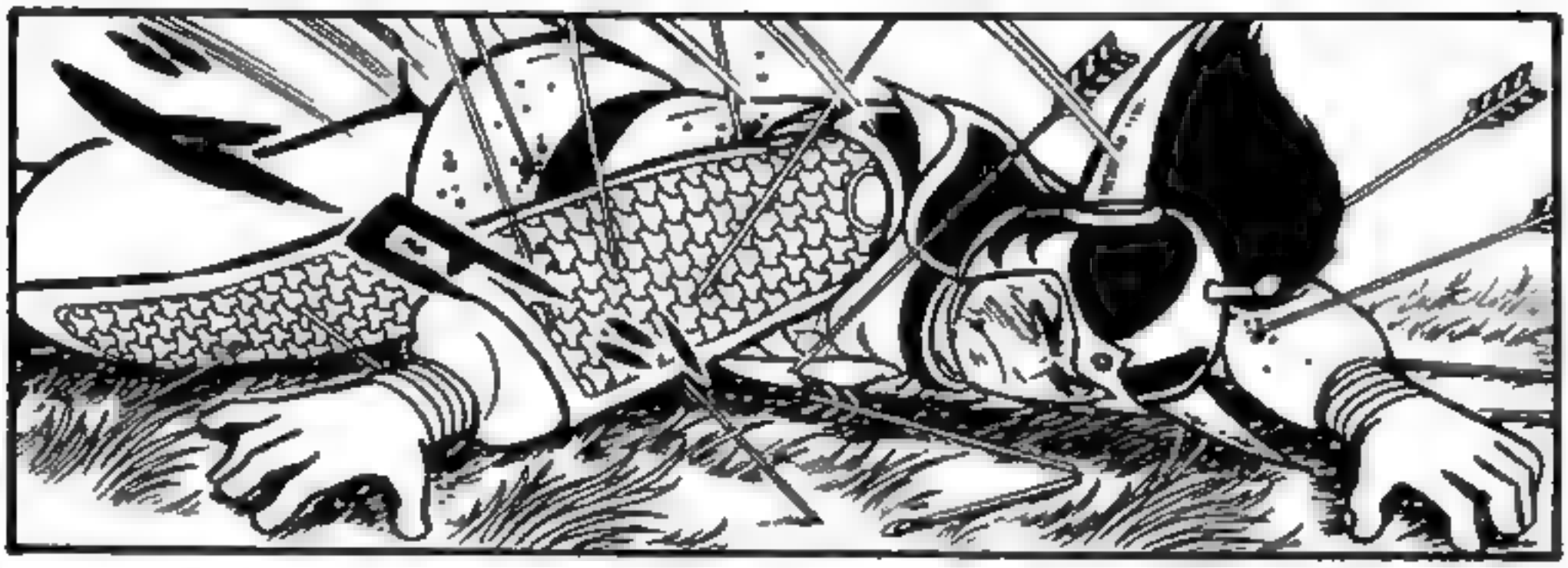
TRICK? I'D RATHER CALL IT A CUNNING PLAN.

FIRE!

UNFORGI-VABLE...!



BROTHER...



GOOD, LET US RETURN BACK TO JIZHOU.

GENERAL!

WHO IS IT?

ZZZZ...
ZZZZ...

LET HIM IN.

PLEASE EXCUSE ME FOR INTRUDING YOUR REST, SIR.

A SPY THAT WE SENT OUT TO JIZHOU HAS BROUGHT BACK AN URGENT REPORT.

GO AHEAD.

SO WHAT'S THIS URGENT REPORT?

YES, SIR.

WHAT!?

I REGRET TO INFORM SIR THAT GONGSUN YUE HAS BEEN ASSASSINATED BY YUAN SHAO.

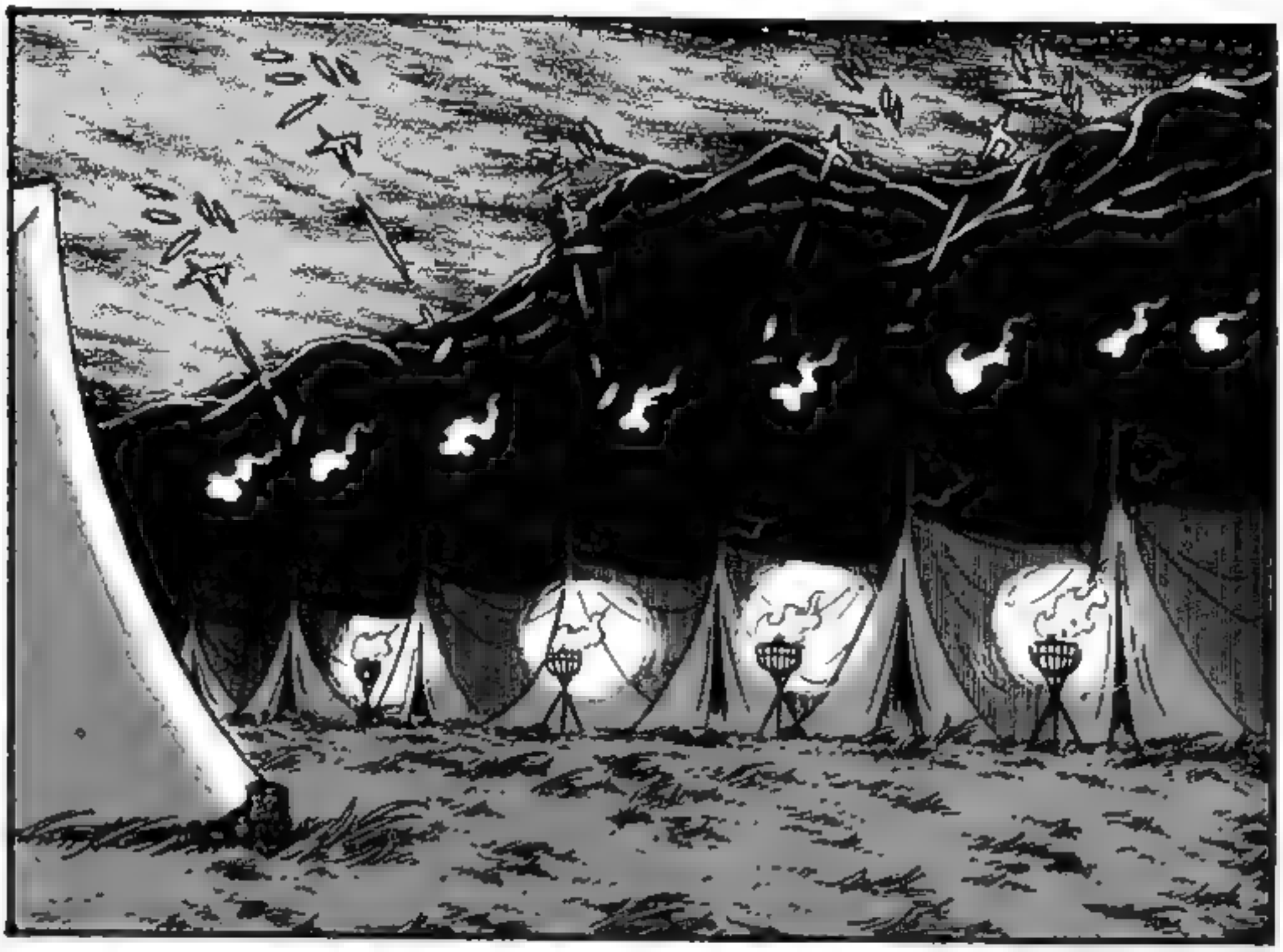
WHY THAT TREACHEROUS SCUM...!

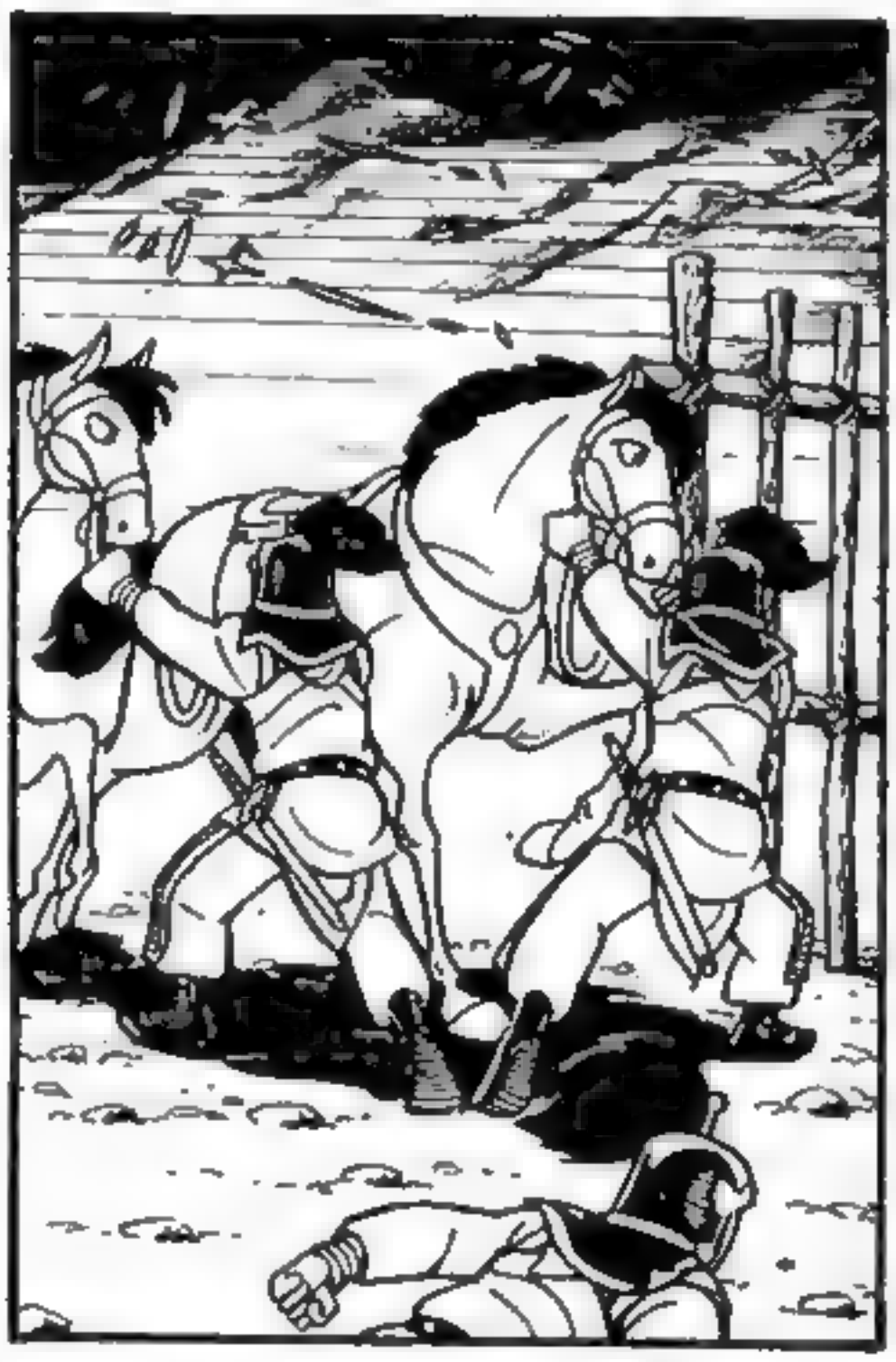
YES, SIR. AND YUAN SHAO HAS NO INTENTION OF DIVIDING JIZHOU WHATSOEVER.

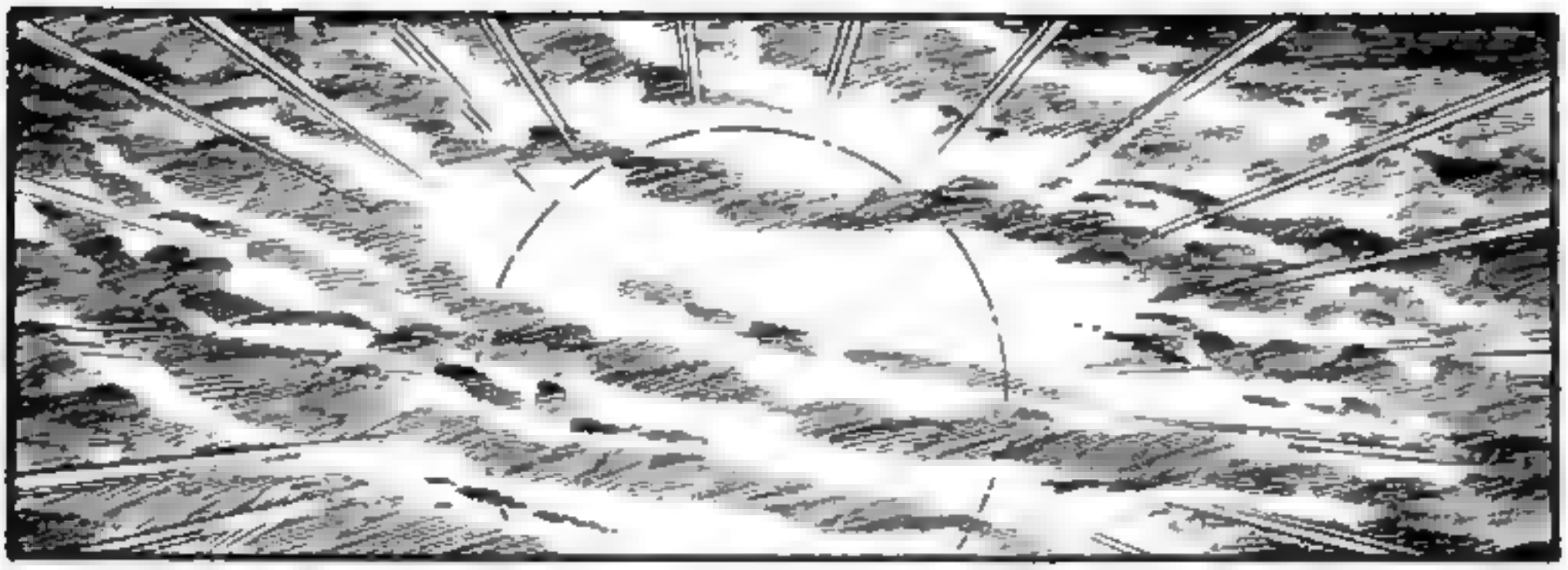
MY BROTHER... KILLED BY YUAN SHAO!?

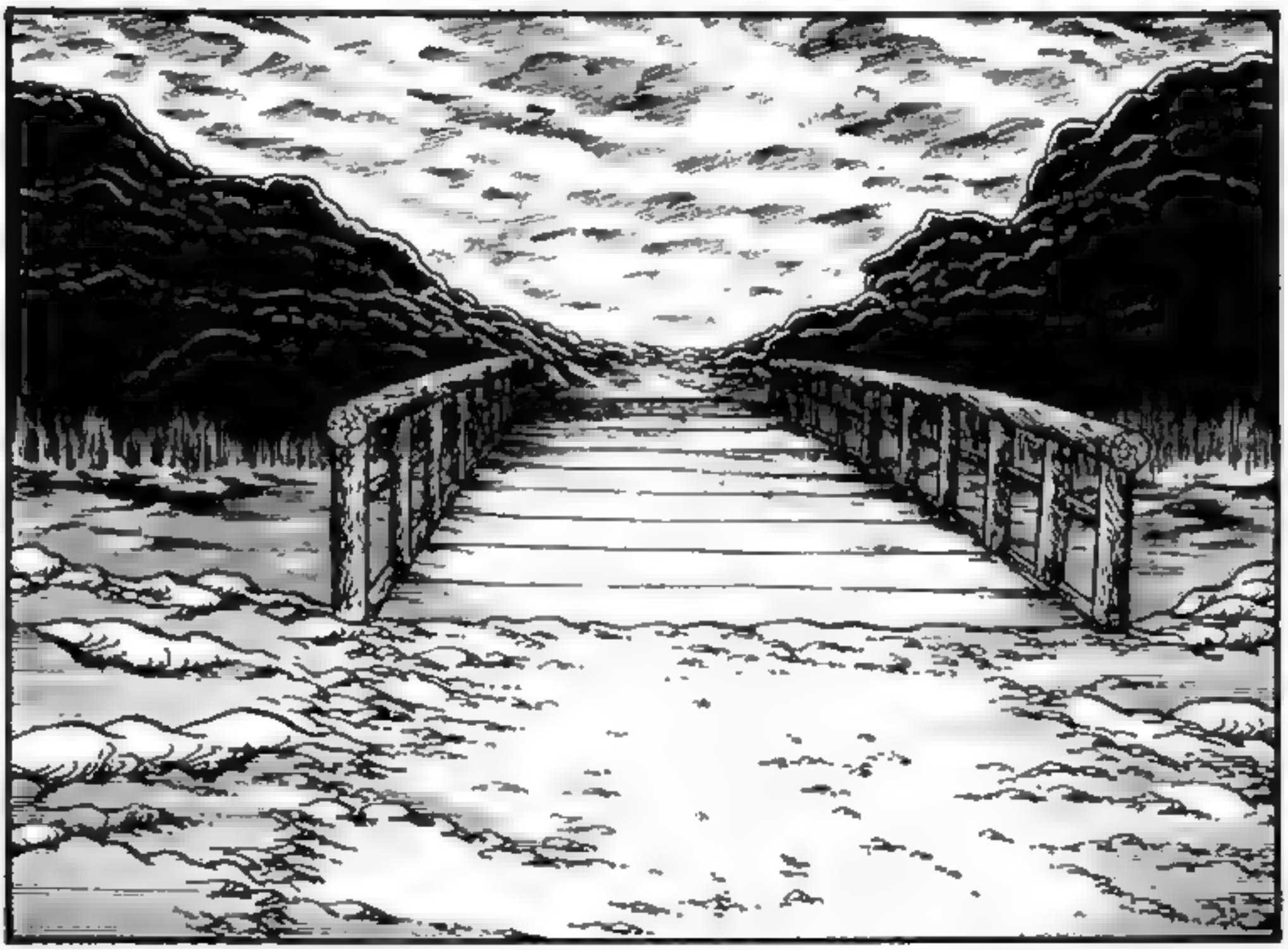
WE SHALL ATTACK JIZHOU AT ONCE!

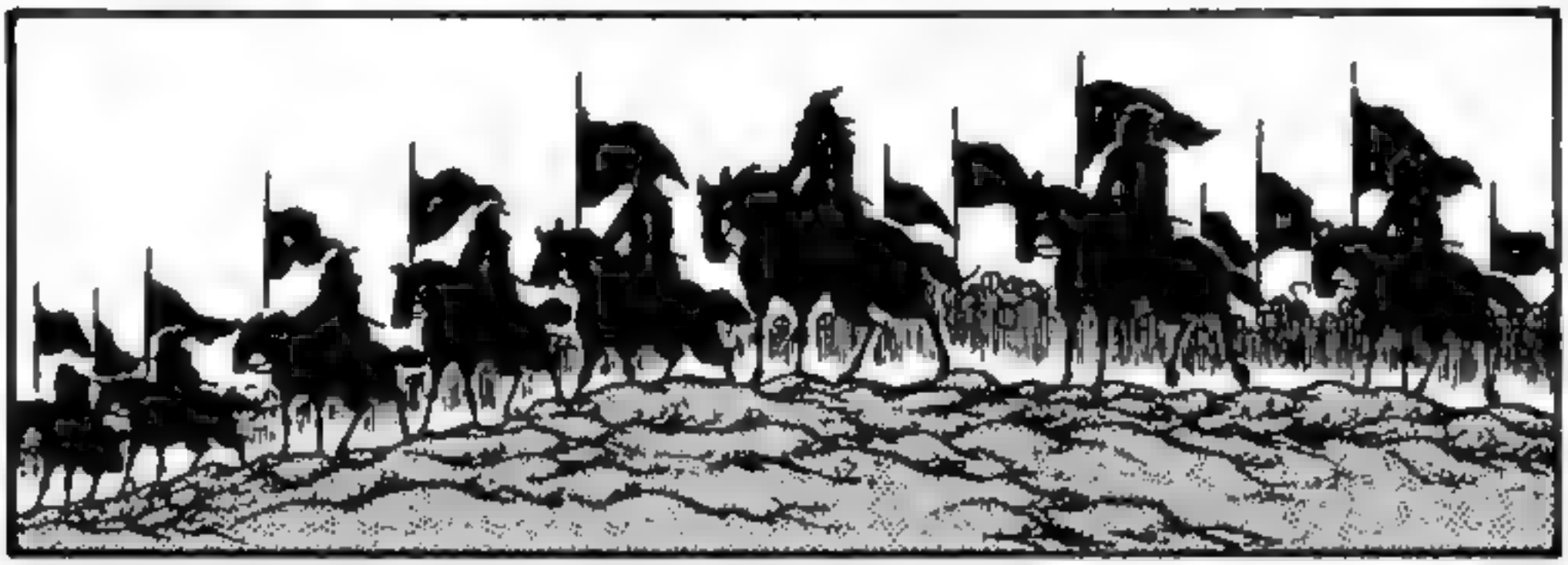
GIVE THE SIGNAL TO DEPART!





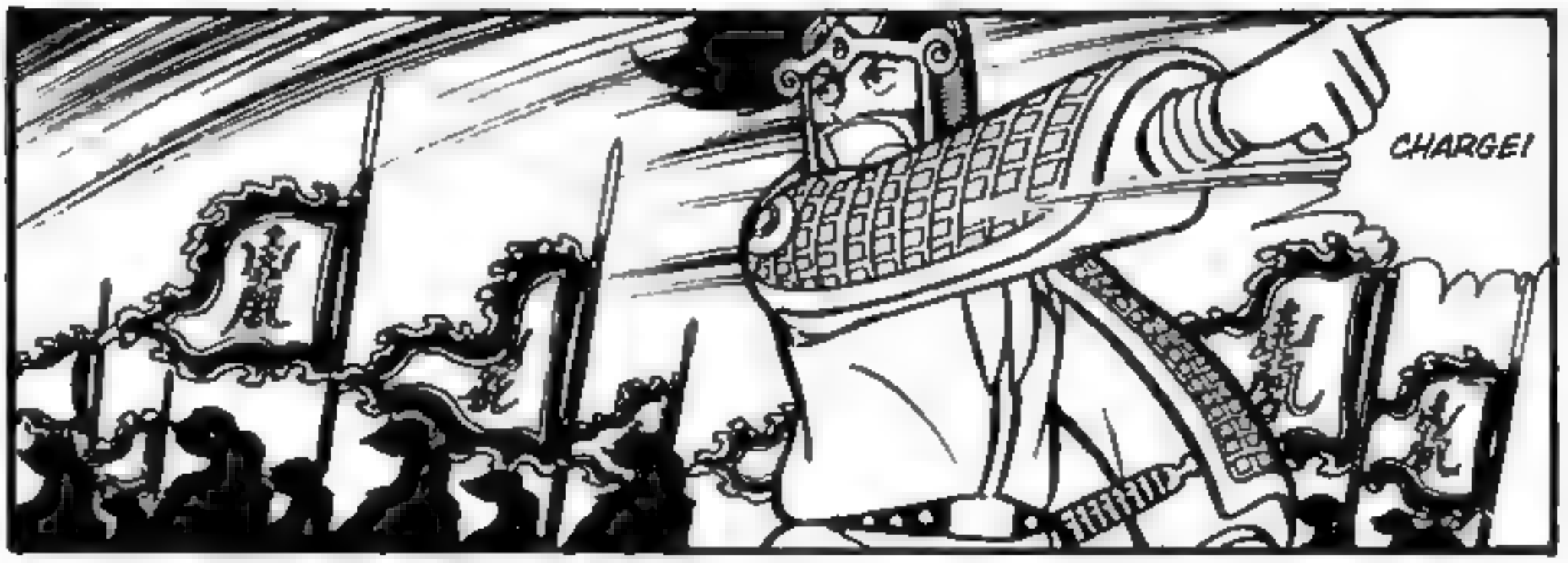


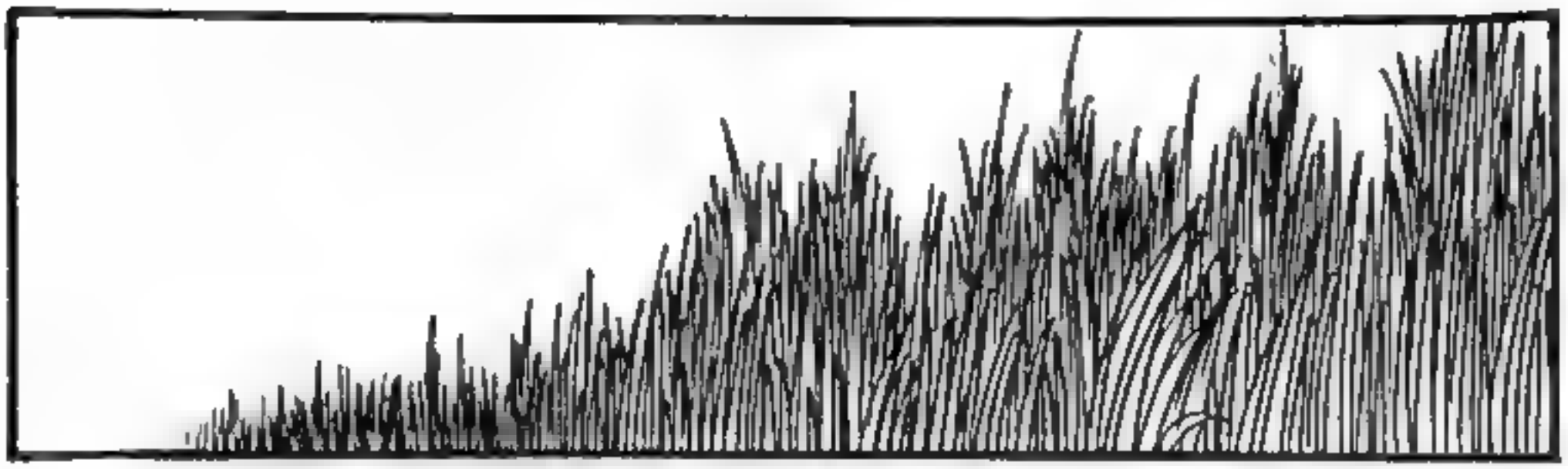


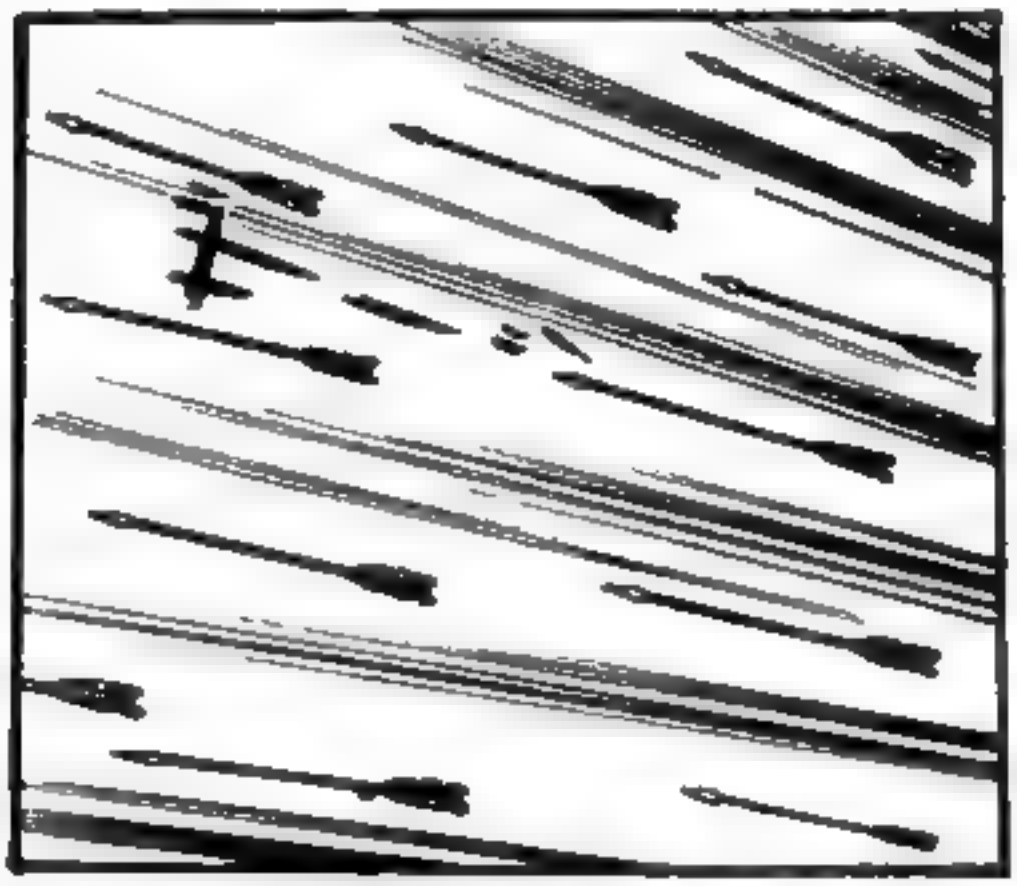


GOOD. LET US CROSS THIS RIVER AND CHARGE INTO JIZHOU TO TAKE YUAN SHAO'S HEAD.

GENERAL, THIS IS THE PAN RIVER. JIZHOU IS JUST ACROSS THIS.

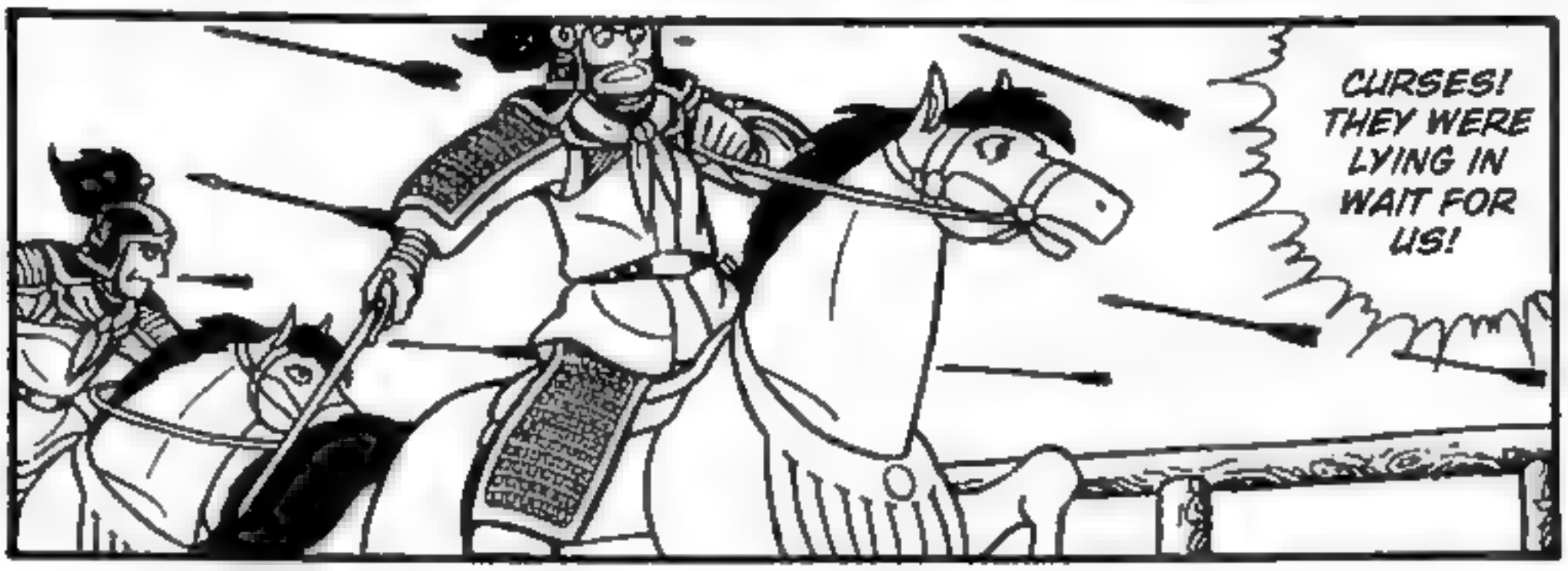

CHARGE!





UGH!

AGHH!


CURSES! THEY WERE LYING IN WAIT FOR US!

NGHHH!

KILL THEM ALL!

I WAS GETTING SO BORED JUST WAITING FOR YOU HERE!

HAHAHA. SO YOU'VE FINALLY COME, GONGSUN ZAN!

ALLOW ME TO SEND YOU TO THE DEPTHS OF HELL!

DO YOU NOT KNOW WHO I AM? IT IS I, WEN CHOU, THE FINEST WARRIOR IN ALL OF BOHAI!

CHARGE!

A WORTHY OPPONENT YOU'LL BE!

OHHH!

COME!
HERE I COME, WEN CHOU!

TAKE THIS!
AND THIS
AND THIS!

PROTECT OUR GENERAL!

OH NO, THE GENERAL IS IN DANGER!

SMALL FRIES OUT OF THE WAY!

RETREAT!

GENERAL, I SUGGEST WE PULL BACK FOR NOW AND ATTACK LATER AFTER RETHINKING OUR BATTLE STRATEGY!

HMPH.

RUNNING AWAY, GONGSUN ZAN!?

OUT OF THE WAY!

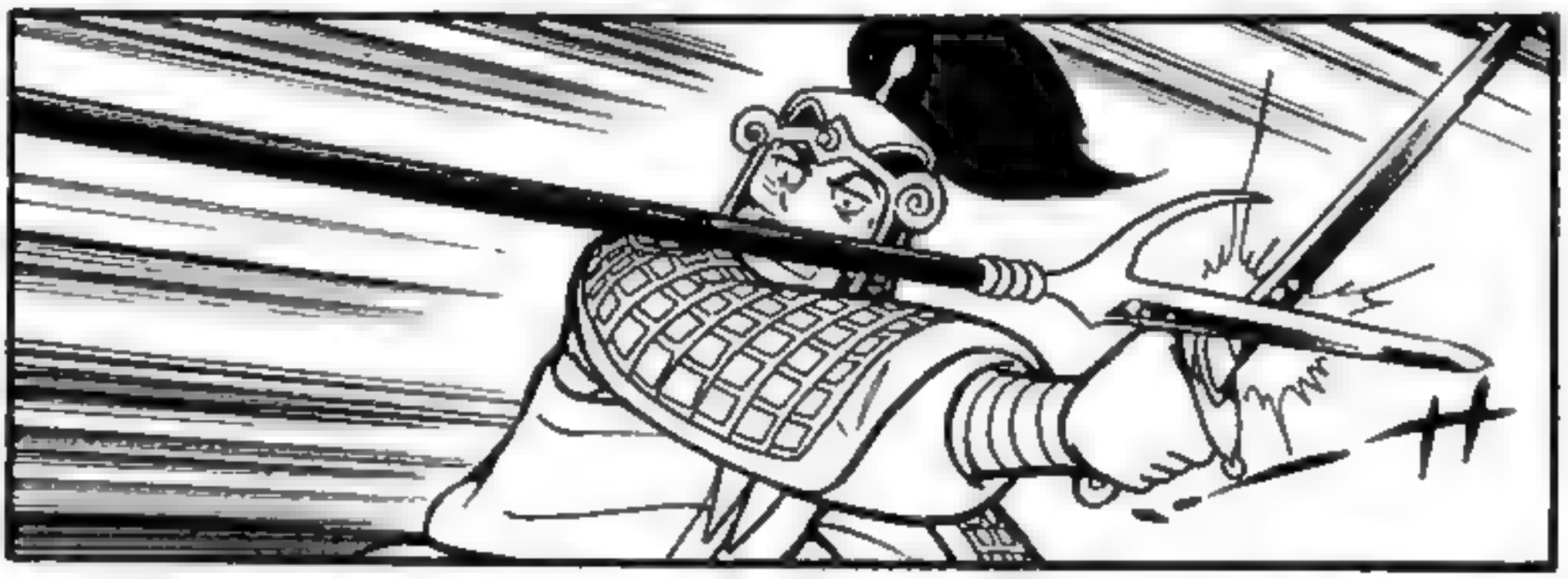
NGRR!

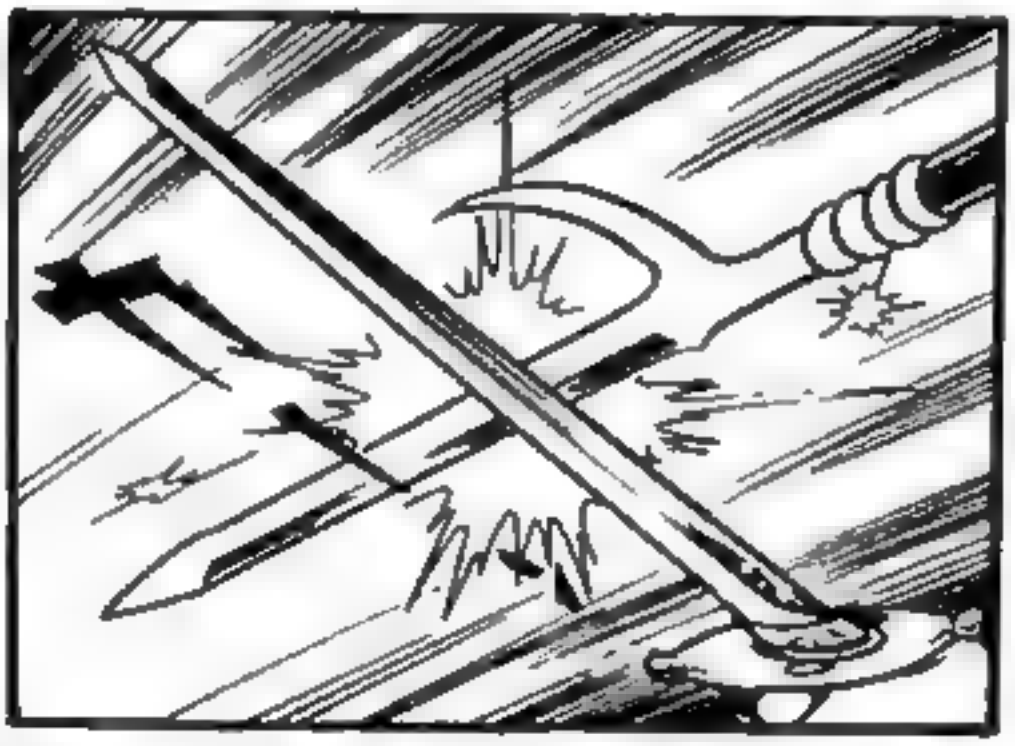
I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE THAT EASILY.

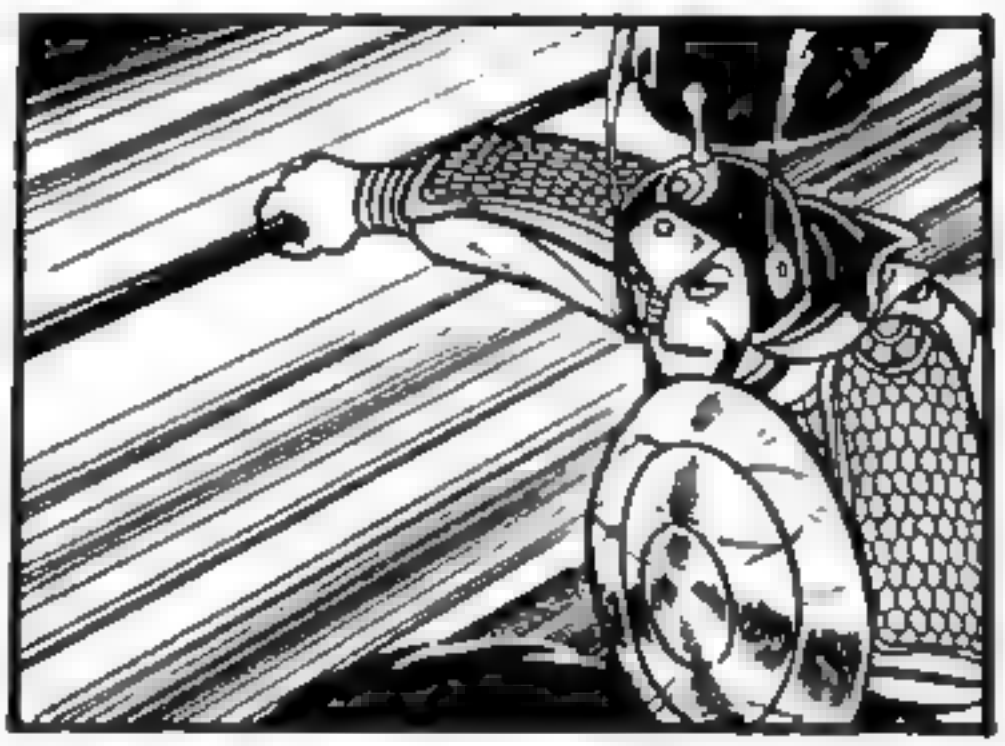
ヒ〃ュ〜〃

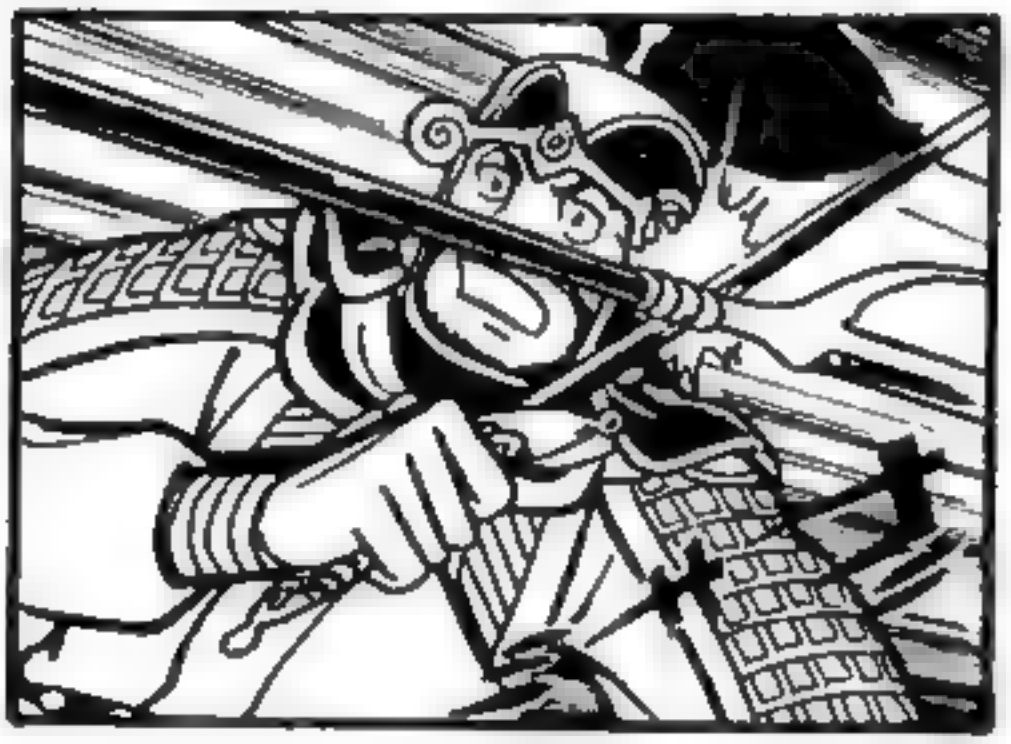
ARGHHH!!!

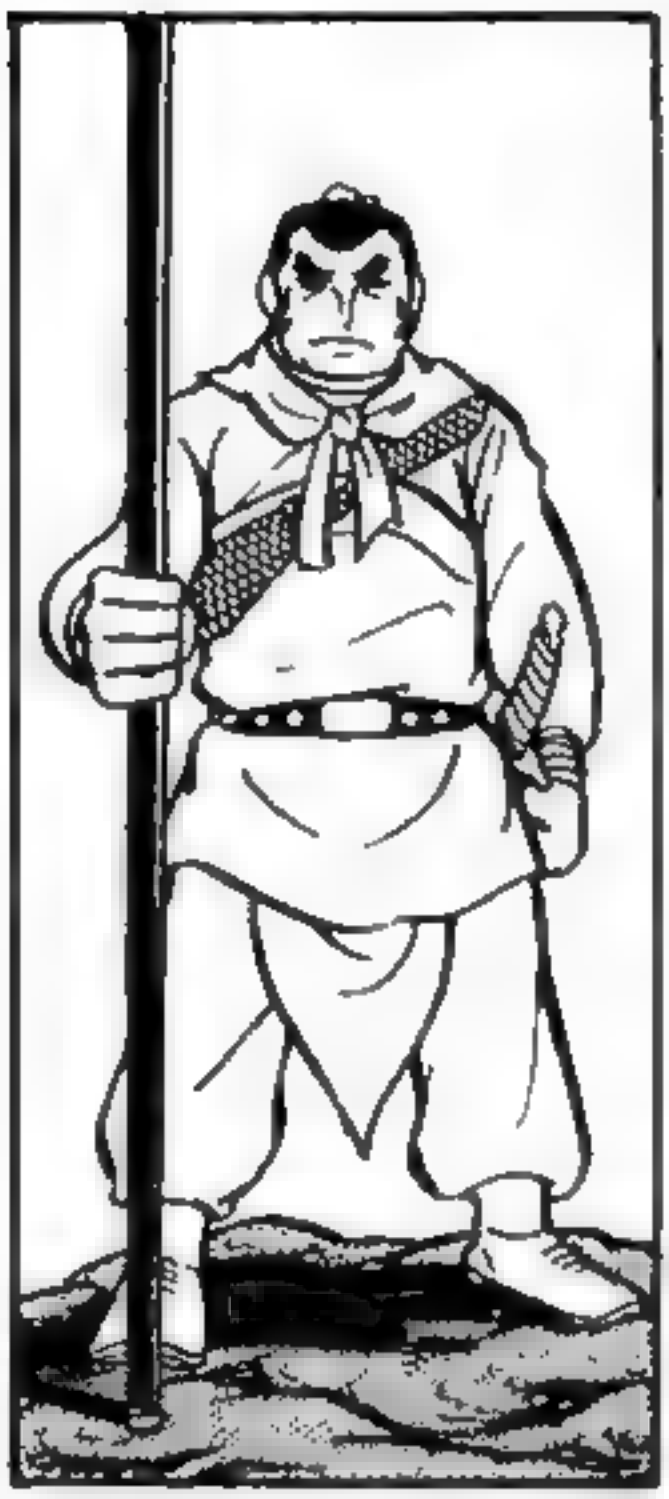
HAHAHA! THIS IS THE END OF THE LINE FOR YOU, GONGSUN ZAN!



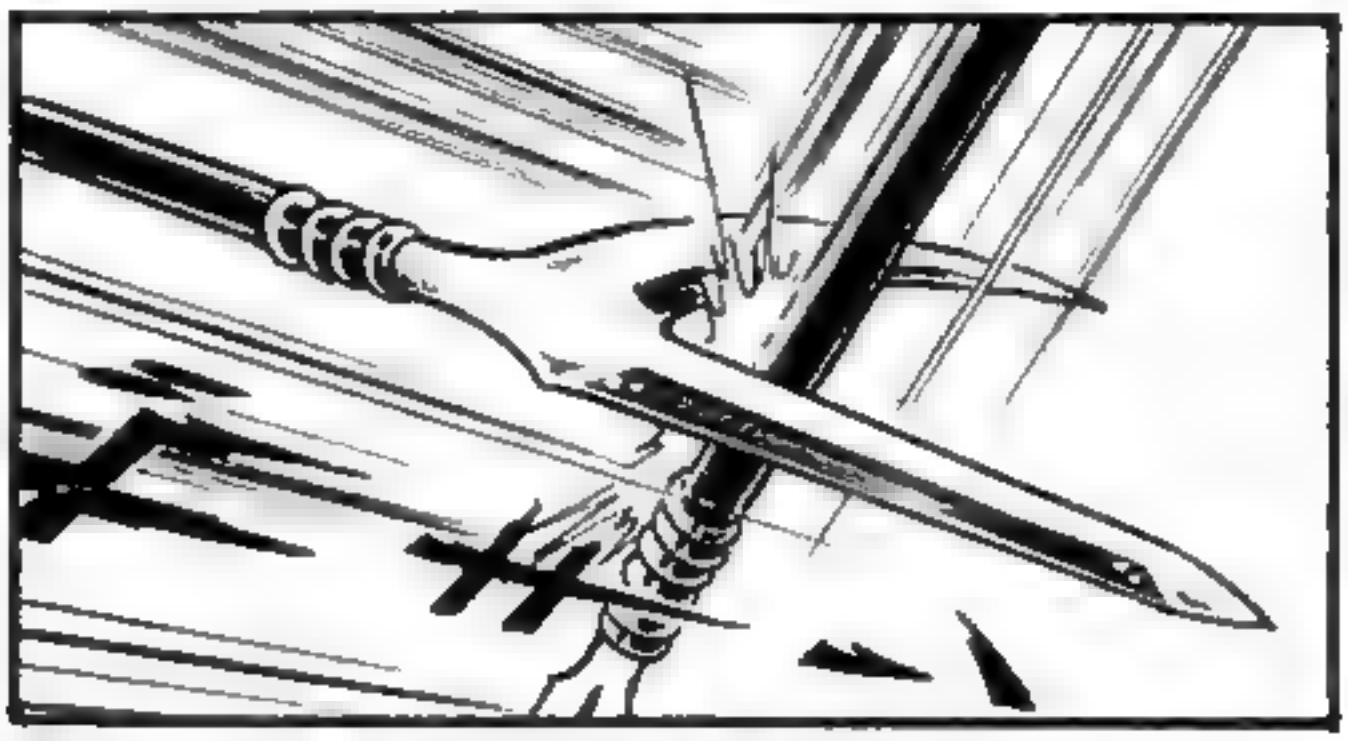


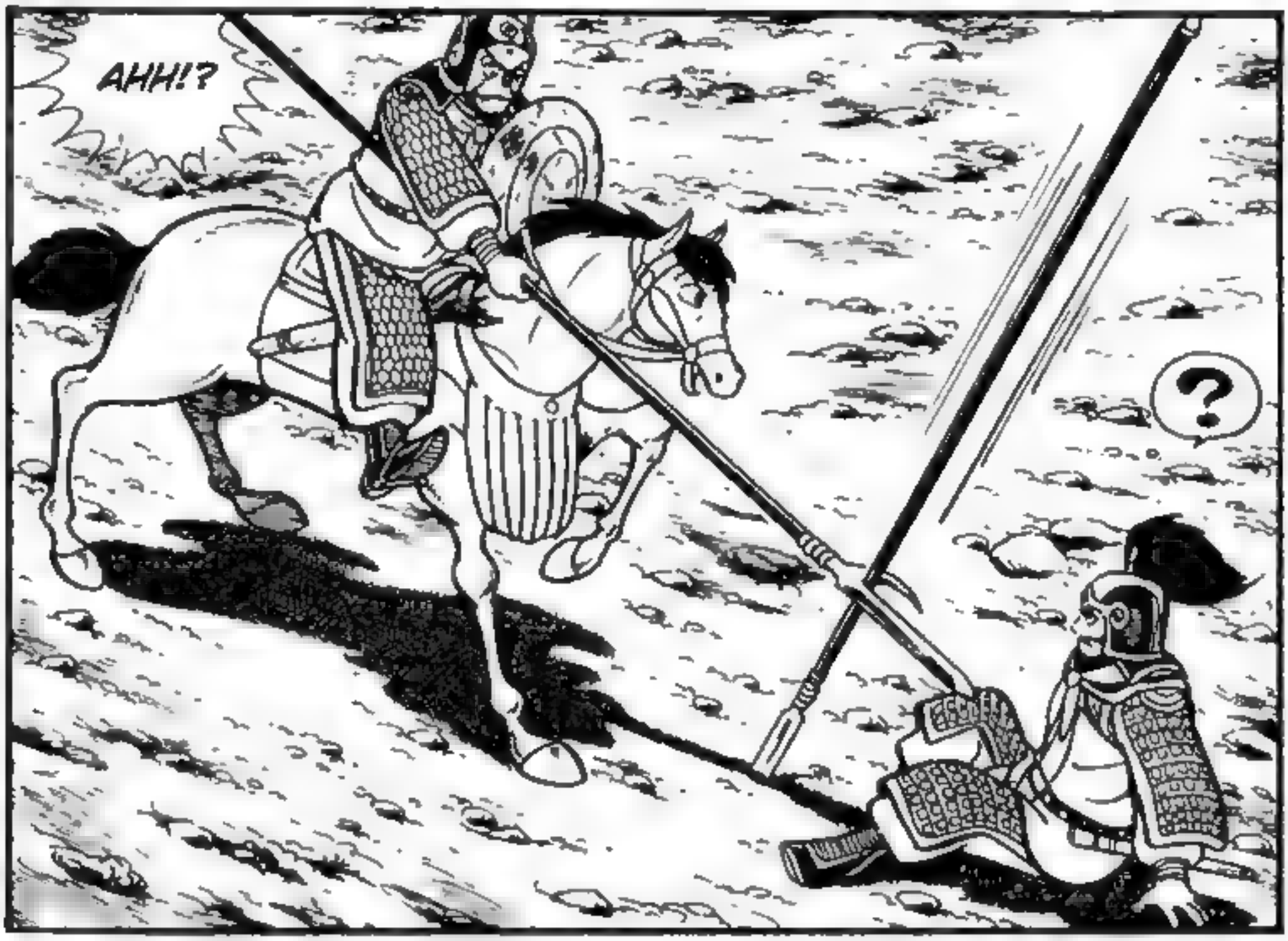




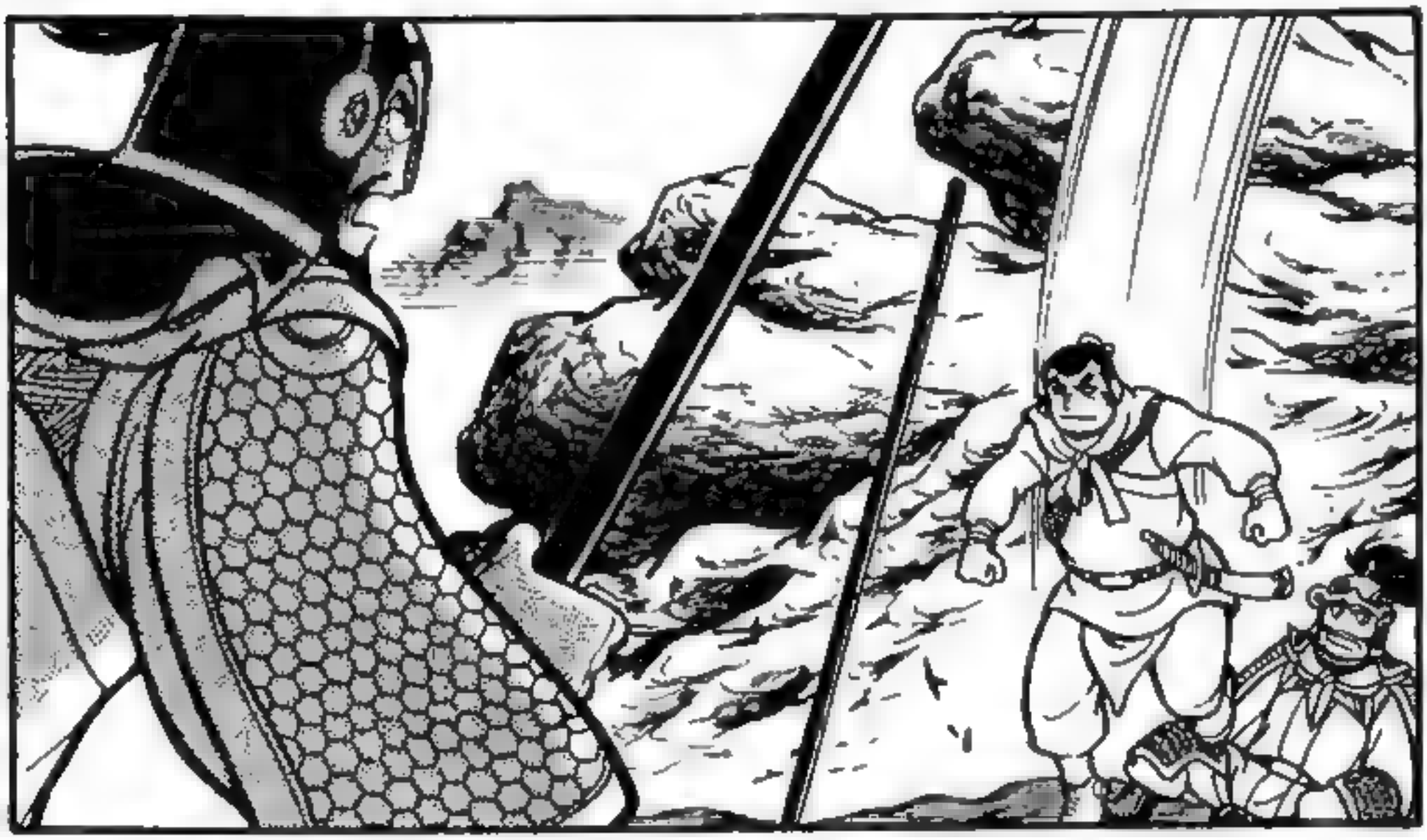


HALT!



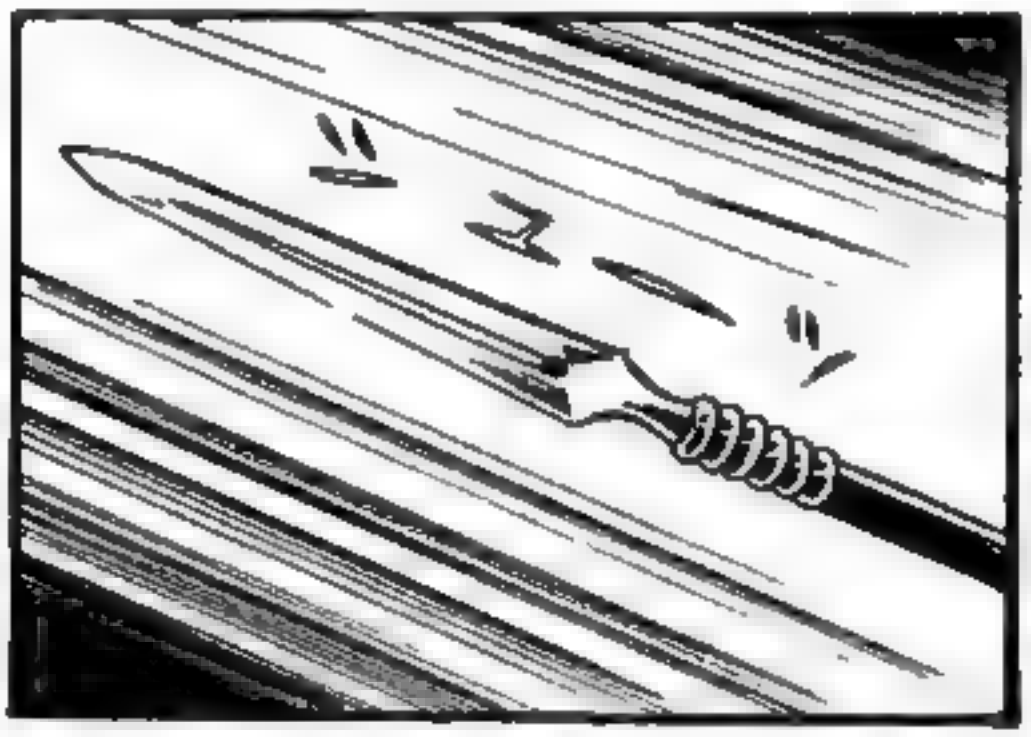

AHH!?
?

WHO DARES TO INTRUDE!?

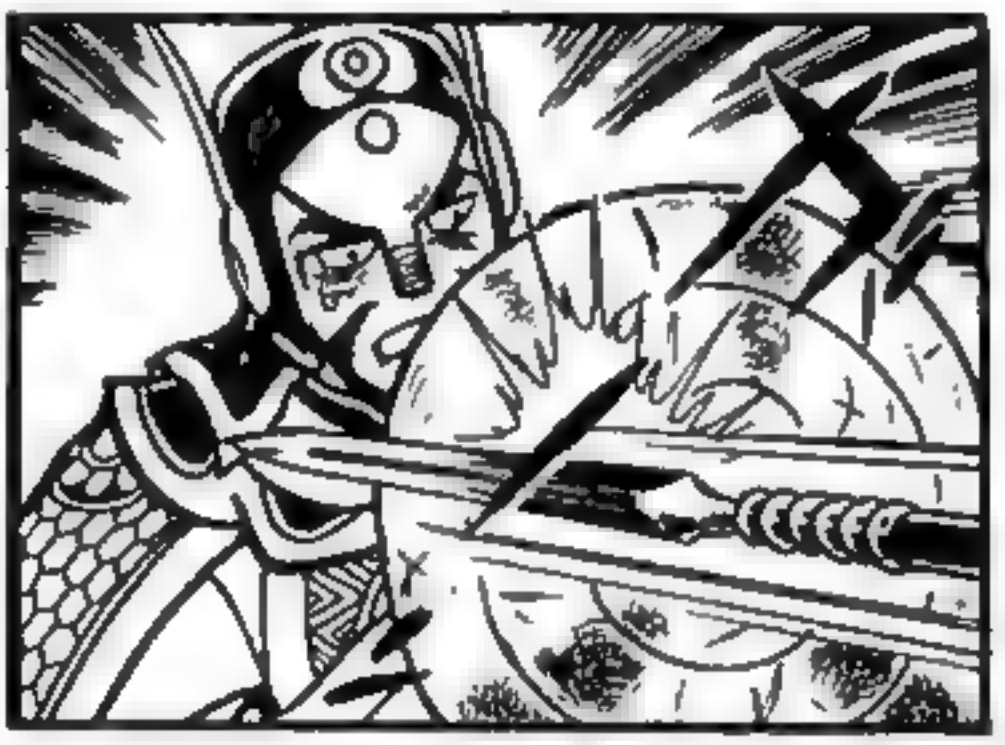


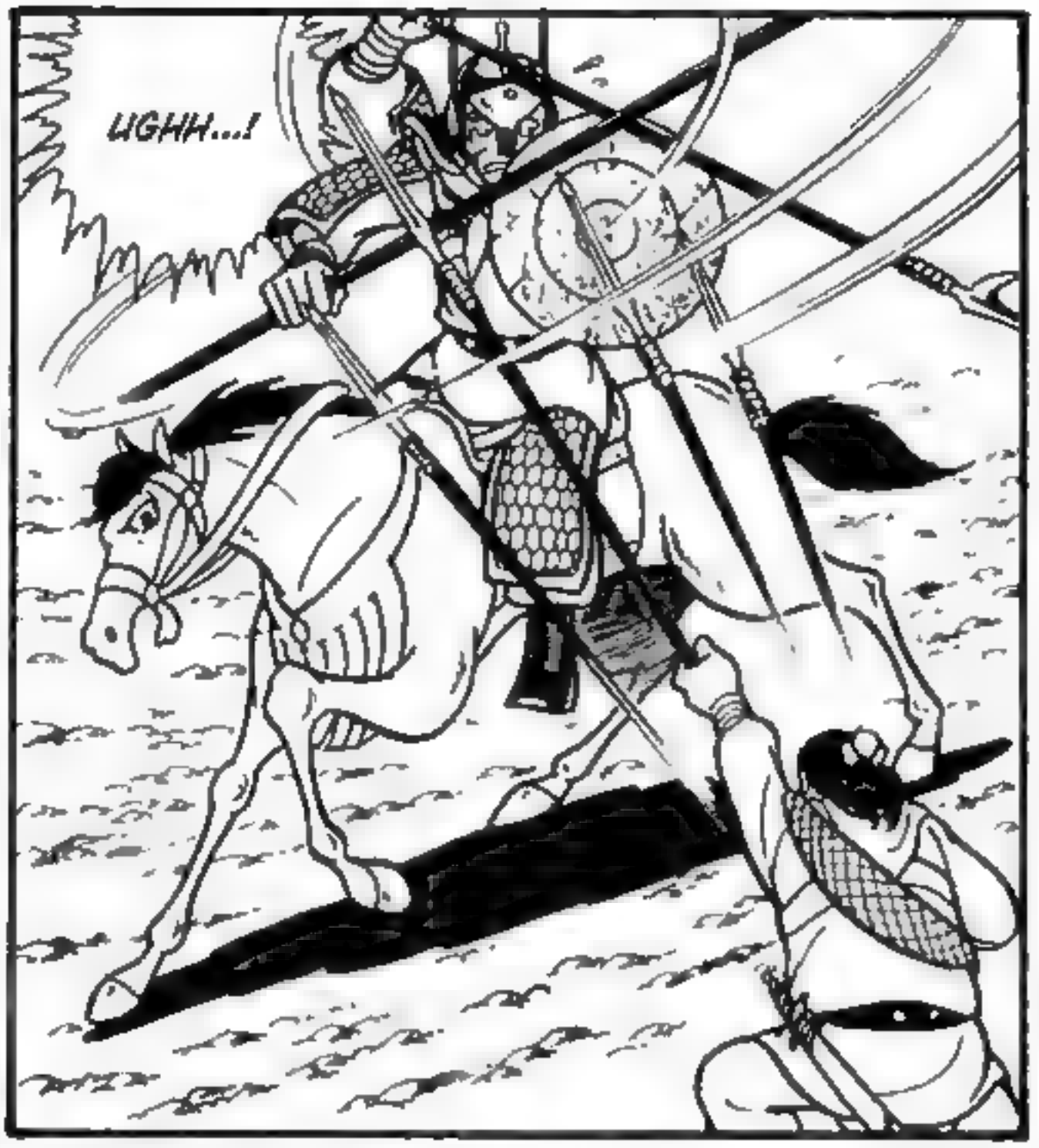
IF YOU REALLY PLACE SO LITTLE VALUE ON YOUR LIFE, THEN FINE. I SHALL HAVE BOTH YOU AND GONGSUN ZAN BECOME PREY FOR MY SPEAR!

I SHALL DEAL WITH YOU.

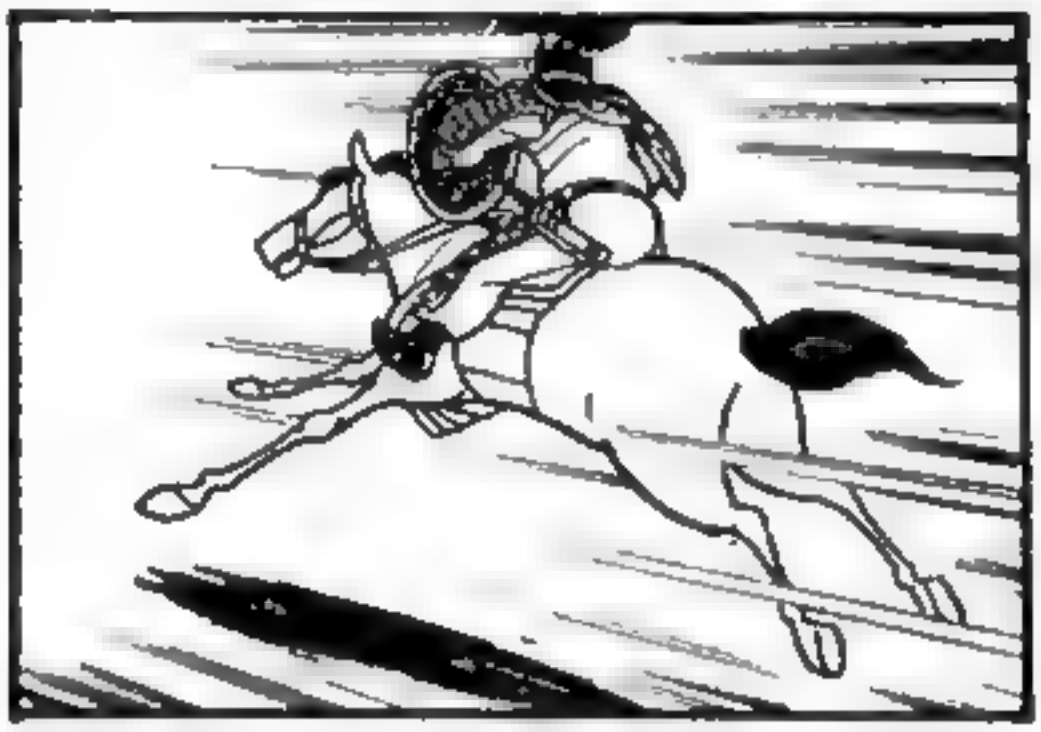


AHH!




UGHH...!

GAHH!



DAMN, I SHALL DEAL WITH YOU TWO AGAIN TOMORROW!

NO, IT WAS NOTHING.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE.

WHEW, I THOUGHT IT WAS THE END OF THE LINE FOR ME!

I AM A FORMER SUBORDINATE OF YUAN SHAO.

MY NAME IS ZHAO YUN, COURTESY NAME, ZILONG.

IT SEEMS THAT YOU ARE IN THE MIDST OF TRAV-ELLING. MIGHT YOU LET ME KNOW YOUR NAME?

WORRY NOT, FOR I HAVE LONG SINCE ABANDONED HIM AND AM LIVING NOW AS A WANDERER.

WHAT!?

I SEE. WELL IT SEEMS THAT YUAN SHAO HAS LOST A VALUABLE RETAINER.

YOU ARE A MAN OF BOTH GREAT COURAGE AND STRENGTH. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN WORKING UNDER ME?

AFTER SERVING YUAN SHAO FOR SOME TIME, I REACHED THE OPINION THAT HE WAS NOT A WORTHY LORD TO SERVE AND SO I WAS THINKING OF RETURNING TO MY HOMETOWN.

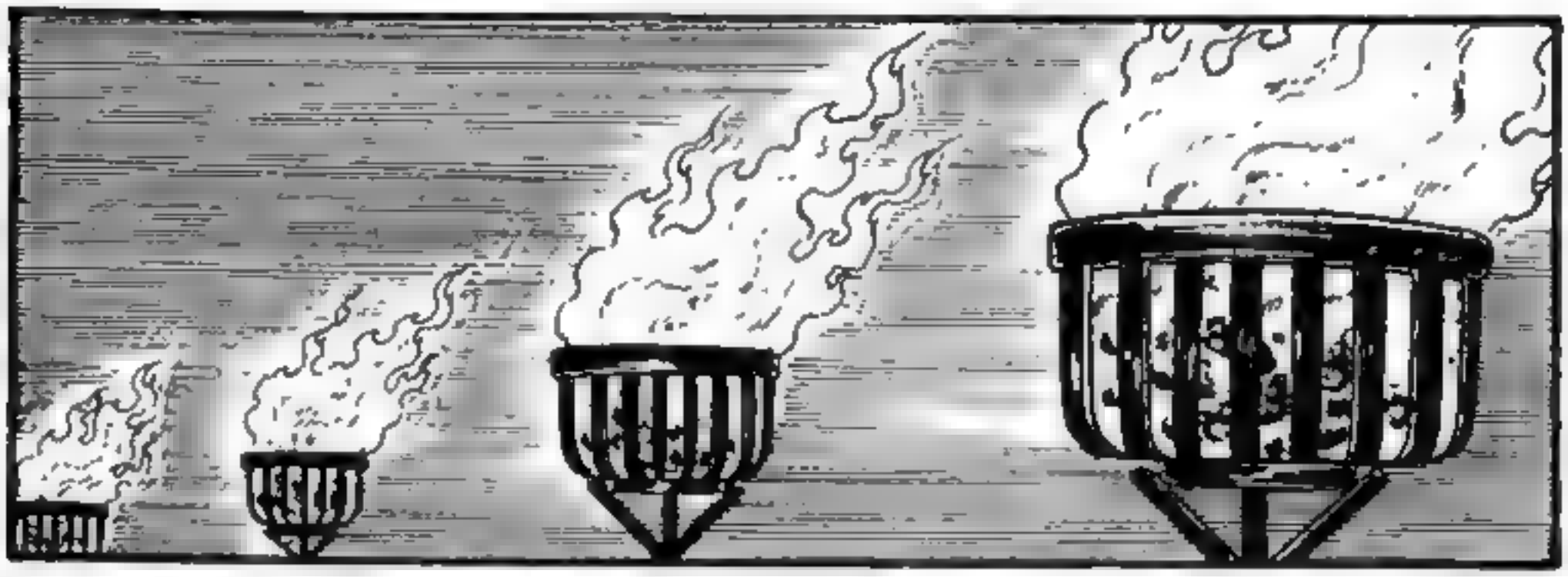
I WOULDN'T MIND HELPING OUT SIR BUT NOT AS A RETAINER.

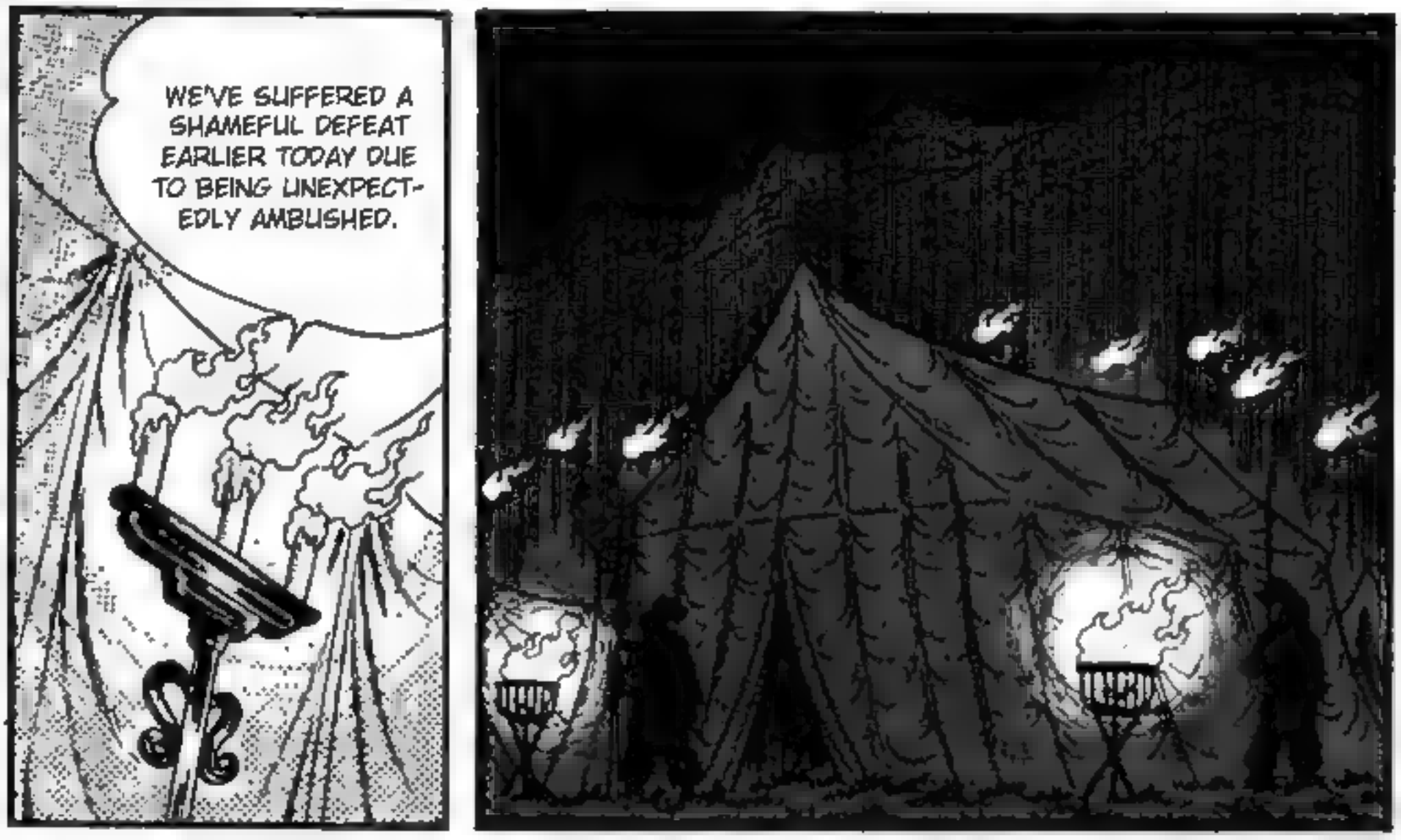
HMM...

THANK YOU. I SHALL TRY MY BEST, SIR.

I SEE THEN. WELL THEN, I SHALL TREAT YOU AS A MERCENARY AID OF SORTS FOR THE TIME BEING.

WHITE HORSE CAVALRY





HE USED TO BE A FORMER SUBORDINATE OF YUAN SHAO.

IT IS THAT MAN WHO SAVED SIR'S LIFE TODAY, ZHAO YUN ZILONG.

YES. I TOO, AM NOT ENTIRELY SURE IF HE CAN BE TRUSTED.

AND WHAT IS THAT?

BUT THERE IS JUST ONE THING THAT TROUBLES ME, SIR.

THEN HE MIGHT BETRAY US AT ANY TIME, SIR.

IF HE TURNS OUT TO BE STILL SECRETLY WORKING FOR YUAN SHAO,

BUT THEN AGAIN, I SUPPOSE IT'S NEVER BAD TO BE A LITTLE CAUTIOUS.

I BELIEVE YOU GENTLEMEN ARE OVERTHINKING THINGS. IF IT WASN'T FOR HIM, WEN CHOU WOULD HAVE KILLED ME AND THE BATTLE WOULD ALREADY HAVE BEEN LOST.

ALRIGHT. I SHALL HAVE ZHAO YUN ZILONG GUARD THE REAR WITH 500 MEN. I'M SURE YOU GENTLEMEN WILL BE ABLE TO ACCEPT THIS.

MY BROTHER YUE! I SHALL AVENGE YOUR DEATH IN BATTLE TOMORROW!

AND SO SIR SHOULD DEPLOY YOUR TROOPS IN THE CENTER HERE, AND HAVE GENERAL YAN LIANG AND WEN CHOU LYING IN WAIT ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT SIDES.

GONGSUN ZAN'S TROOPS WILL DEFINITELY CROSS THE RIVER THROUGH THIS BRIDGE HERE.

WITH THIS, GONGSUN ZAN'S FORCES WILL BE ANNHILATED FOR SURE.

AND SO ONCE GONGSUN ZAN CROSSES THE BRIDGE, THE THREE TROOPS WILL BE ABLE TO SURROUND HIM AT ONCE.

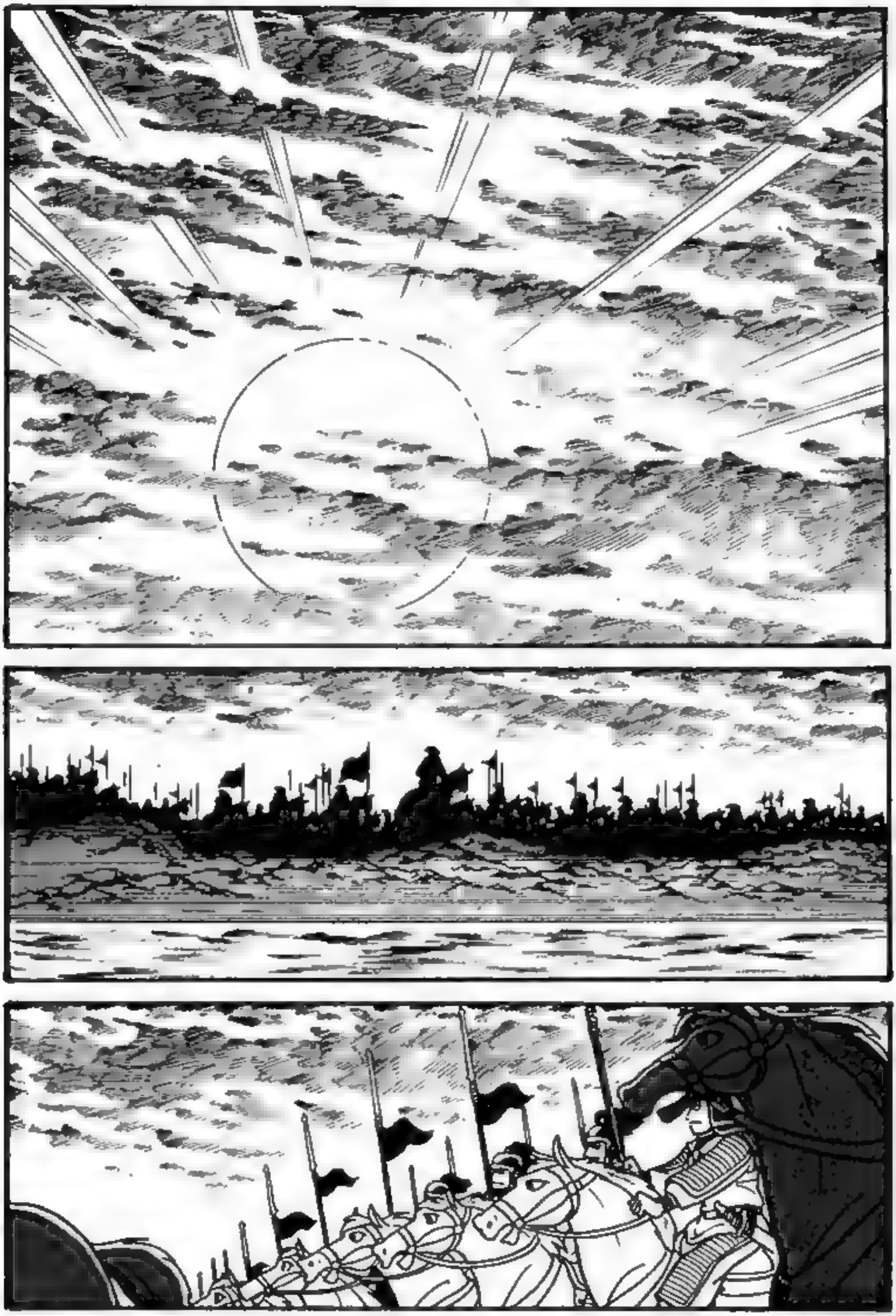
WEN CHOU. YAN LIANG. DEPLOY YOUR FORCES TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT OF THE BRIDGE AS WE PLANNED.

YES, YES... THIS IS A GOOD PLAN.

YES, SIR.

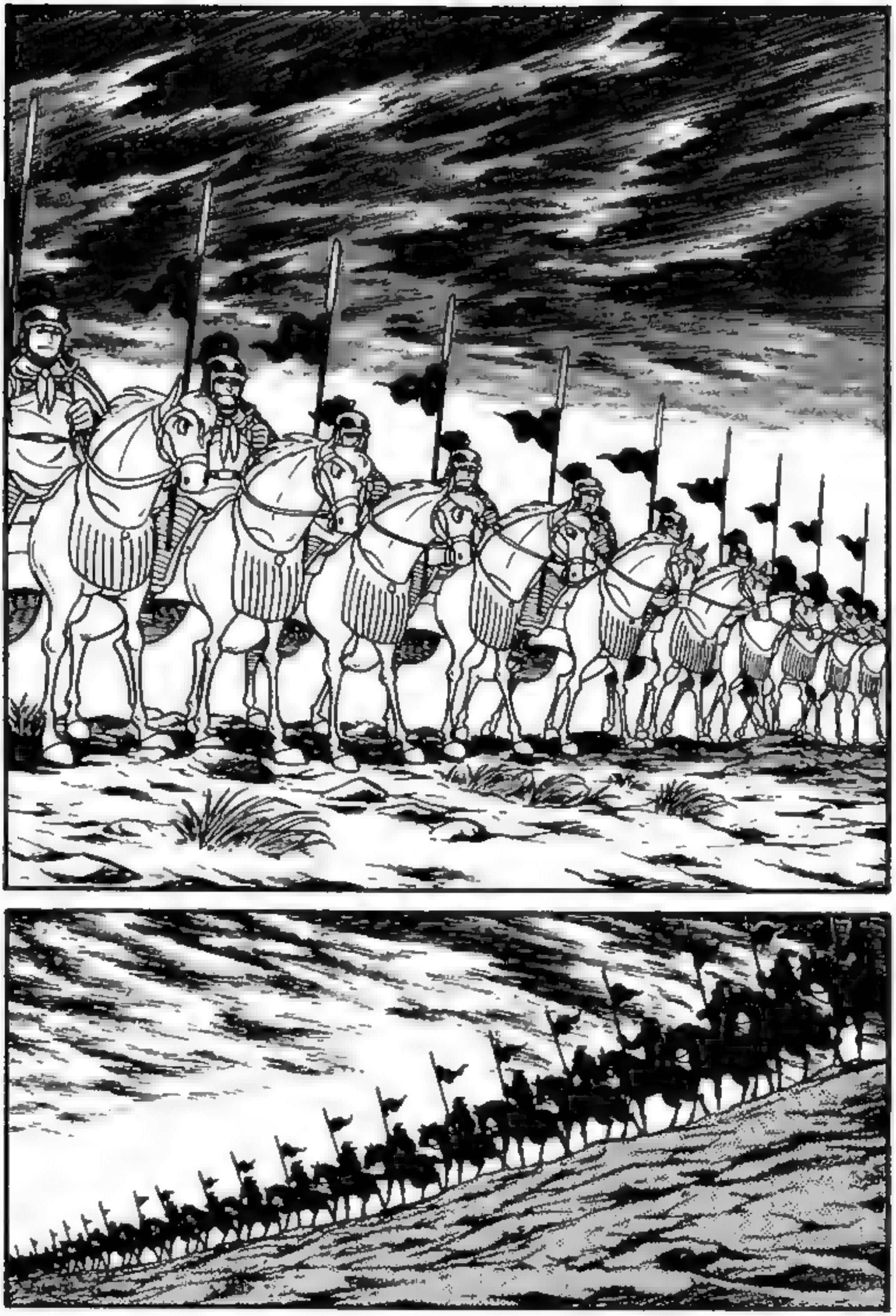
YES, SIR.

HAHA, CONSIDER TONIGHT YOUR LAST DAY ON THIS EARTH, GONGSUN ZAN!



TREMBLE AT THE MIGHT OF OUR SUPREME POWER!

YUAN SHAO, THIS IS OUR FAMED WHITE HORSE CAVALRY THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN DEFEATED IN BATTLE.

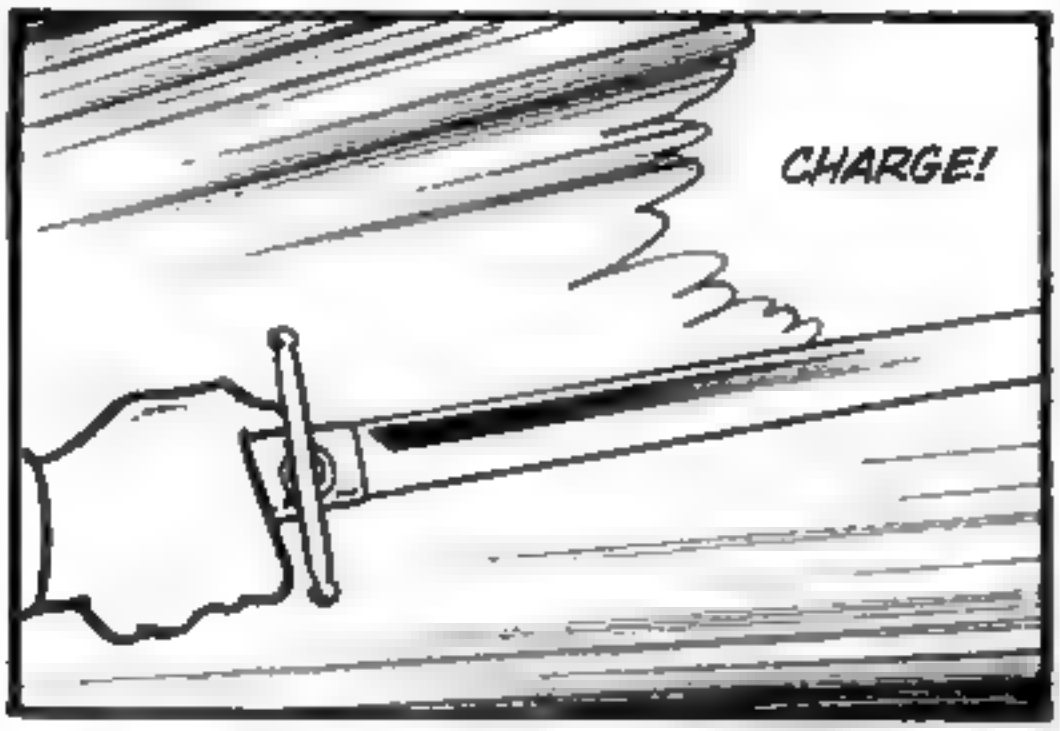


YES.

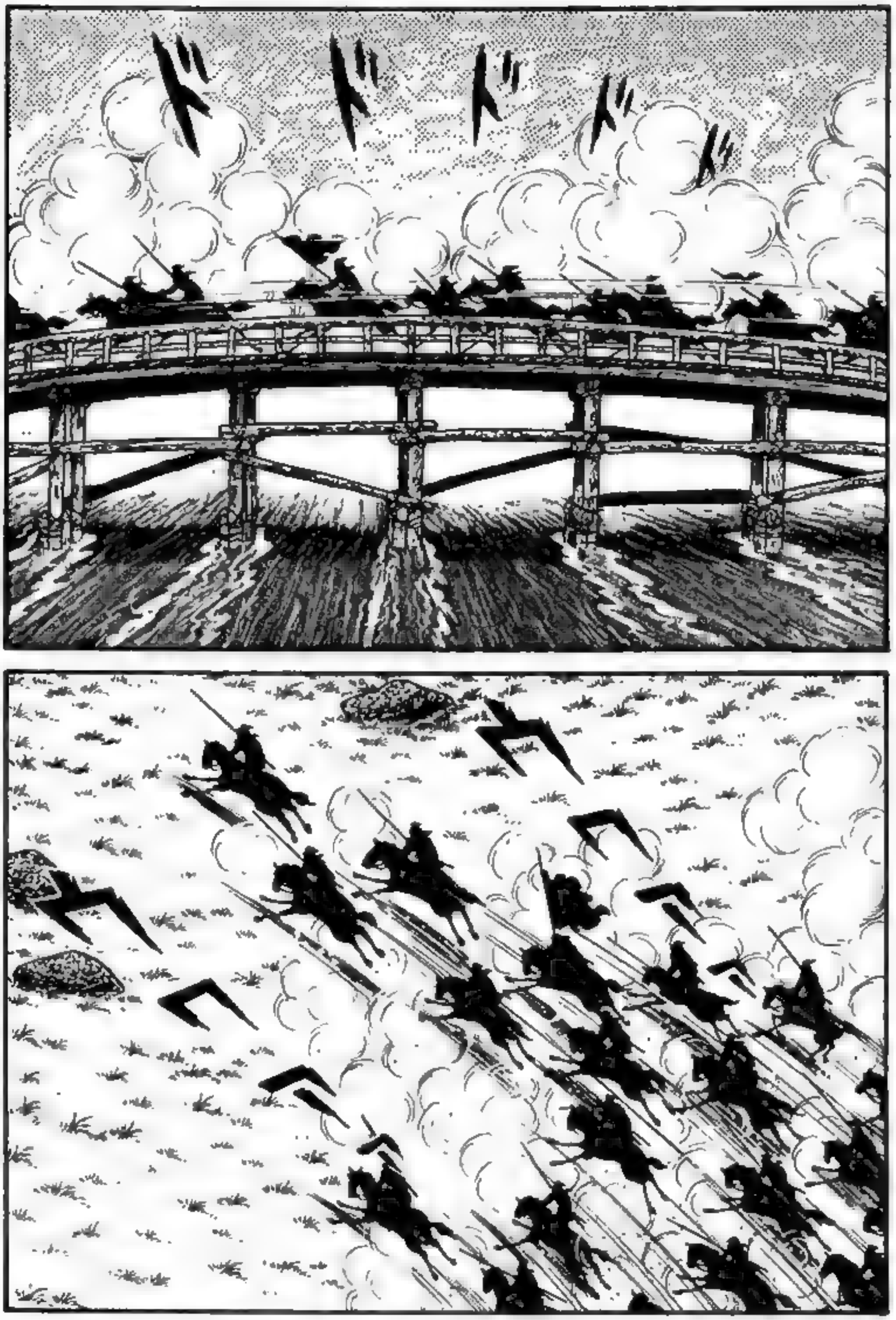
JUST GIVE THE ORDER TO CHARGE WHENEVER YOU WISH, SIR!

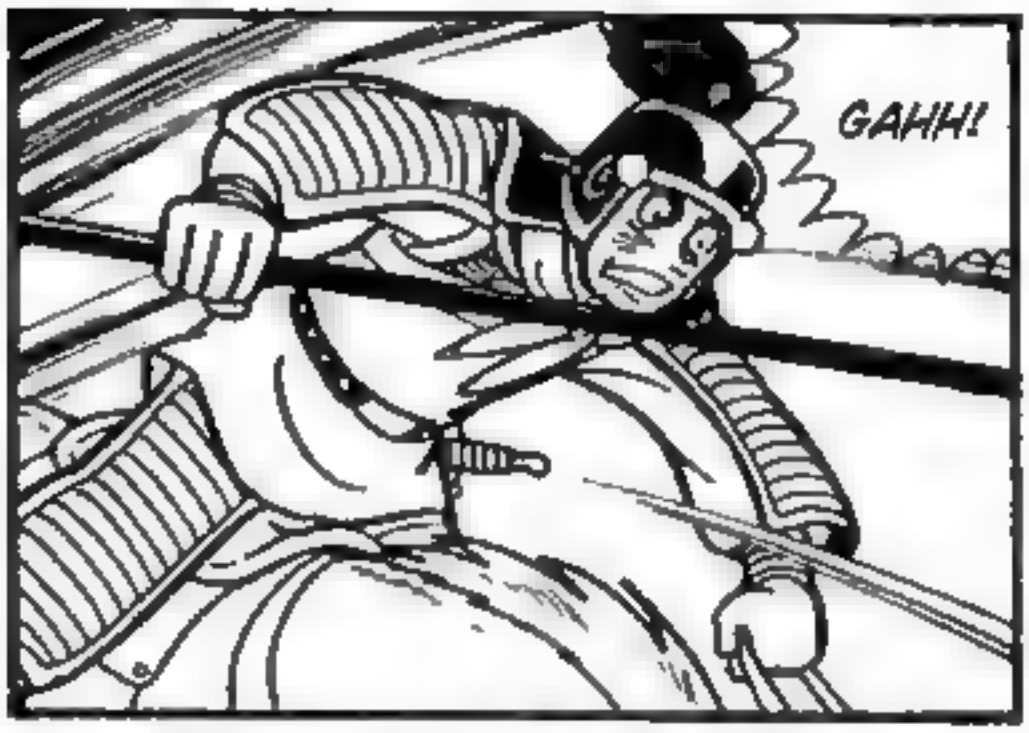
THOSE FLAGS YOU SEE INDICATE WHERE YUAN SHAO'S MAIN FORCES ARE.

MEN! TAKE A LOOK STRAIGHT AHEAD OF YOU!


CHARGE!

NOW LET US STORM IN LIKE A TYPHOON AND TAKE YUAN SHAO'S HEAD!

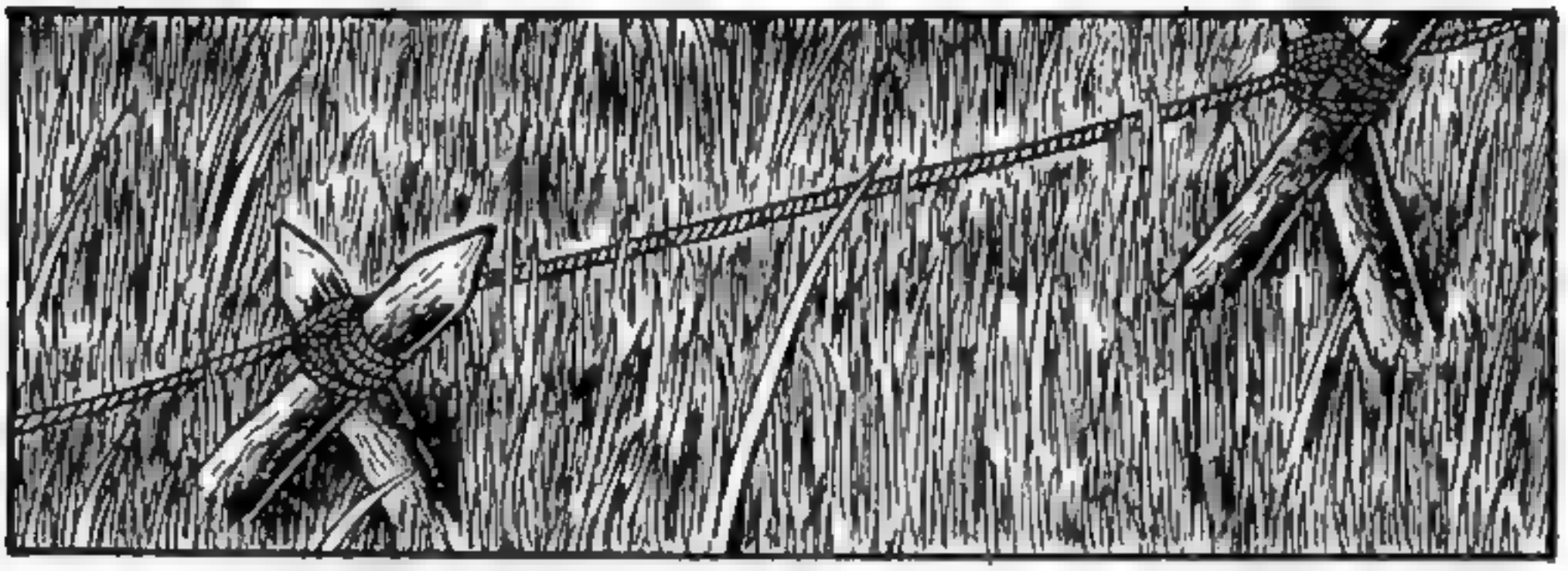



GAHH!

AGH!

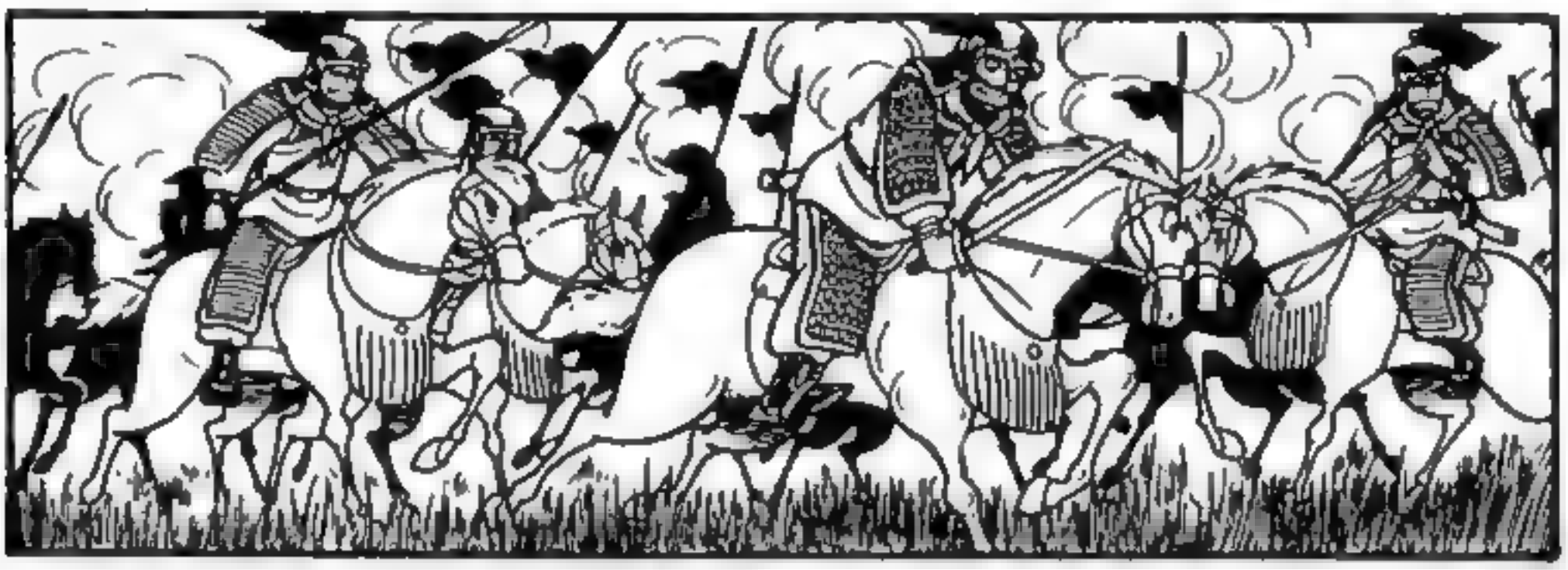
AHH!

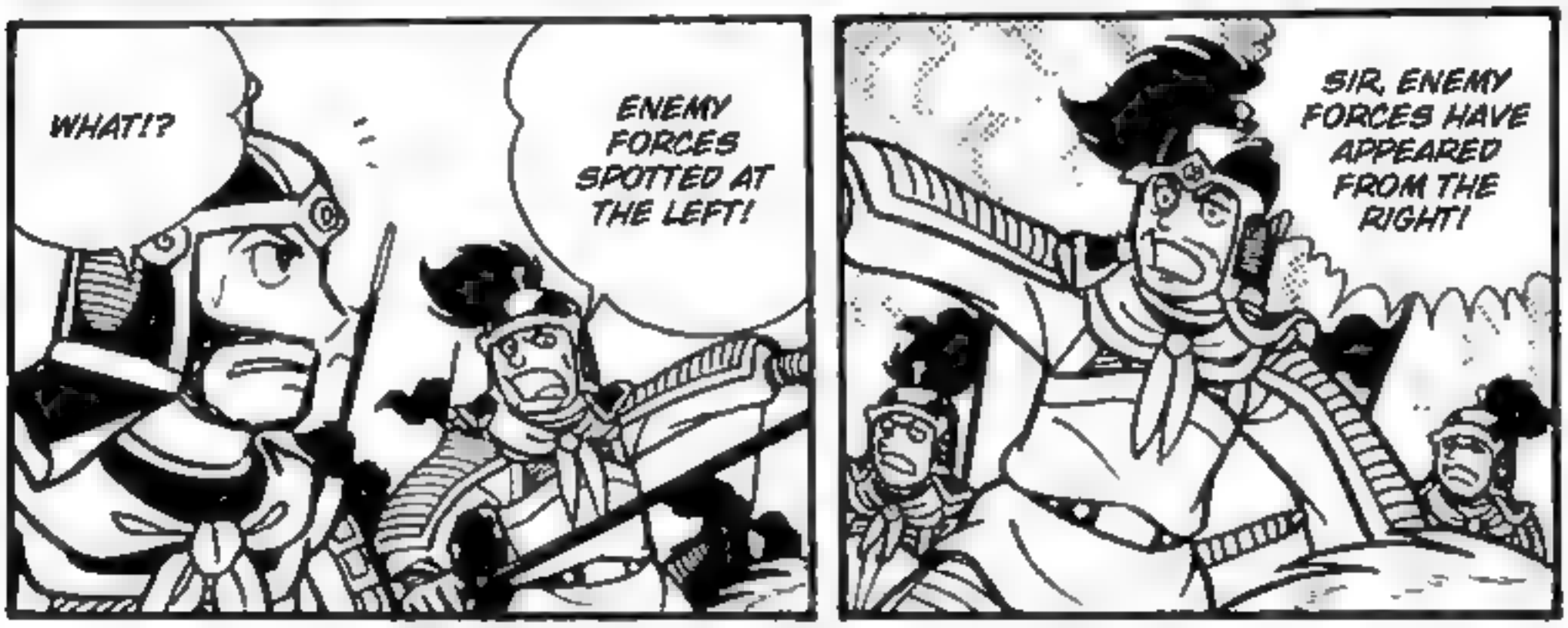
WHAT!?



WATCH YOUR STEPS, MEN!

DAMN THAT YUAN SHAO! HE SET UP A TRAP TO SLOW DOWN THE WHITE HORSE CAVALRY'S SPEED!



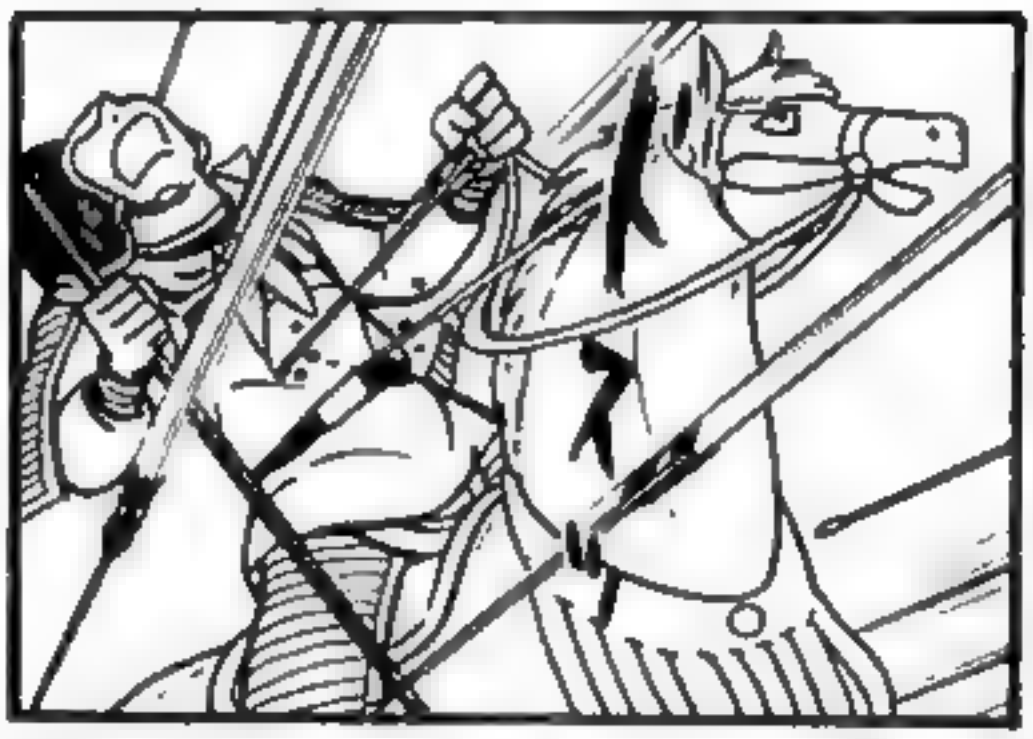

WHAT!?
ENEMY FORCES SPOTTED AT THE LEFT!
SIR, ENEMY FORCES HAVE APPEARED FROM THE RIGHT!

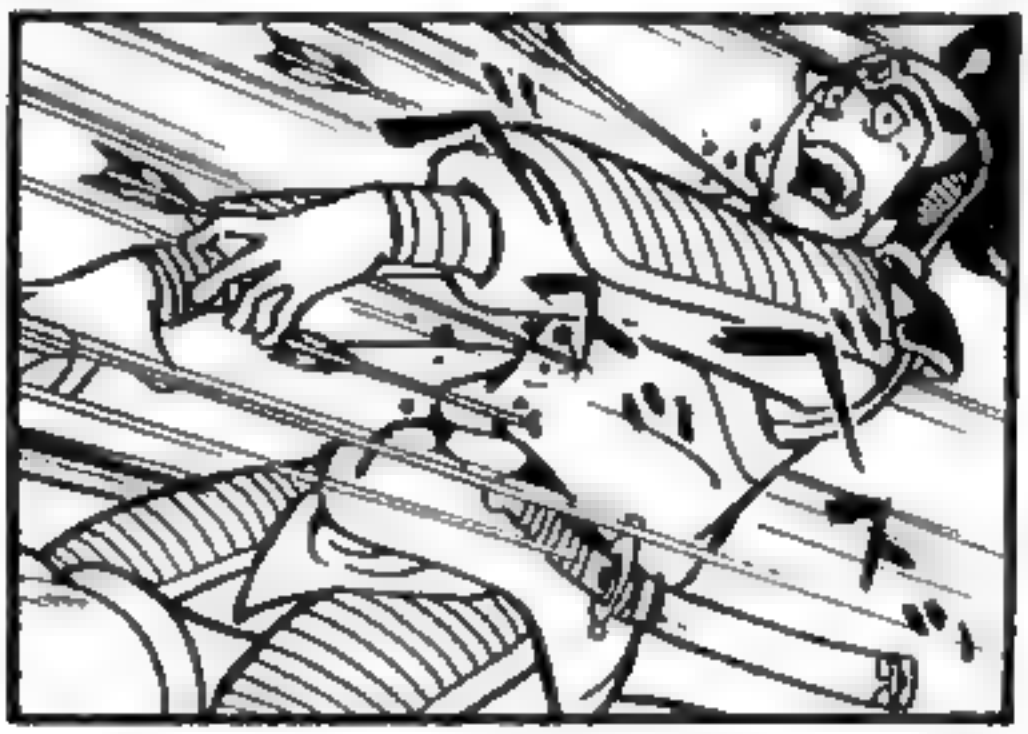
THE WHITE HORSE CAVALRY WITHOUT THEIR SPEED IS A HAWK WITHOUT WINGS OR TALONS.

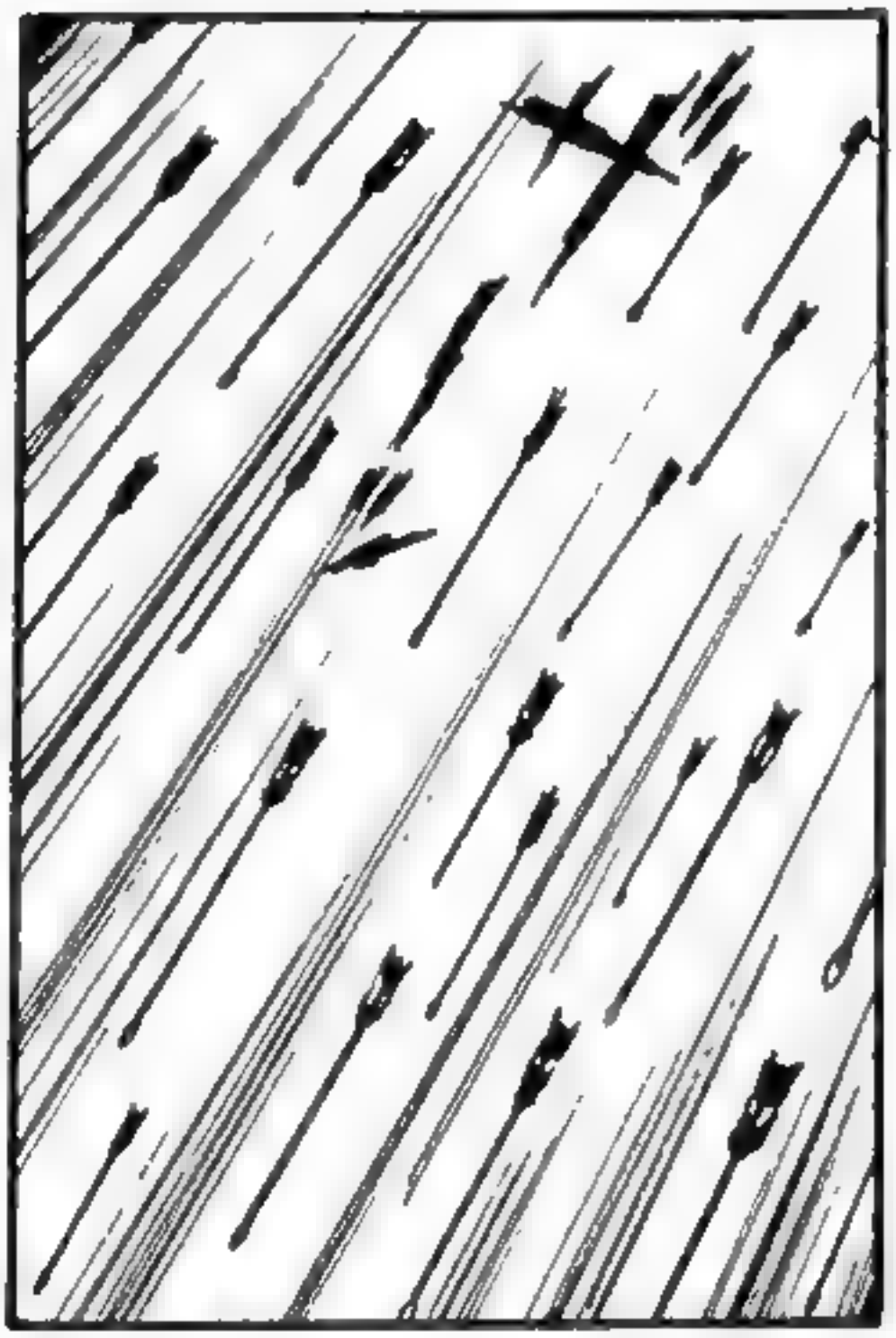
HAHA, YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN CAUGHT IN OUR TRAP!

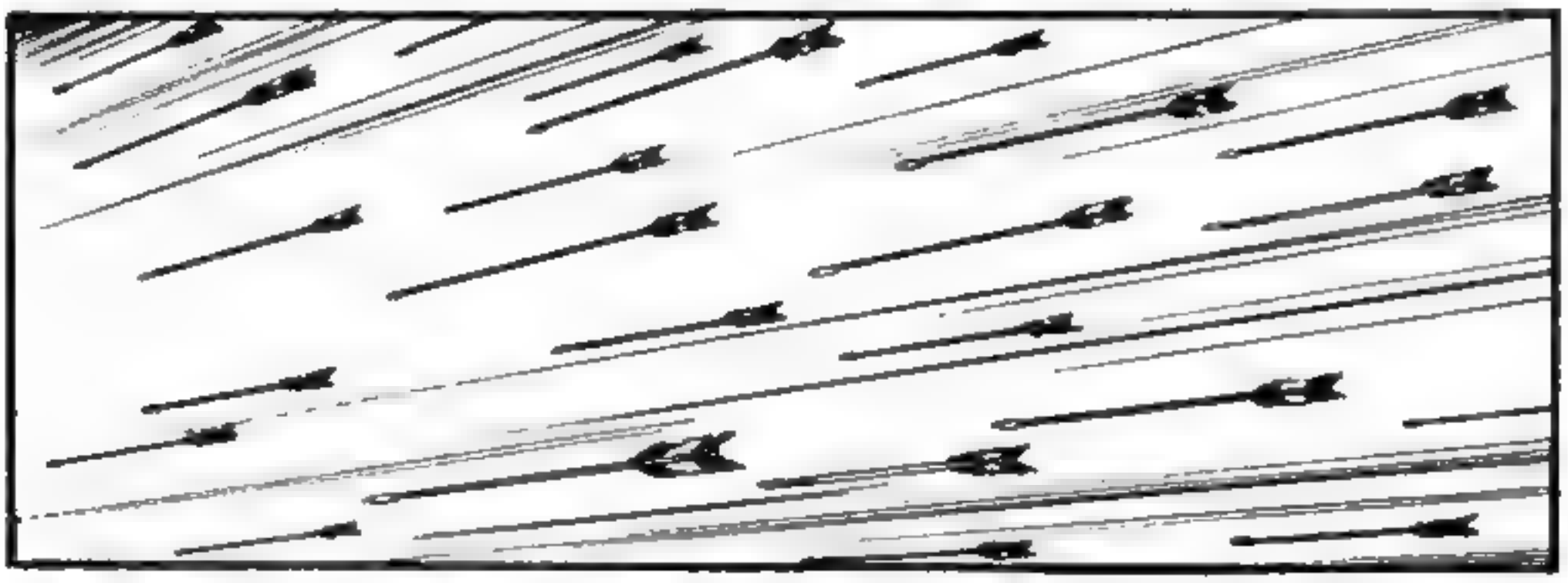
ATTACK!

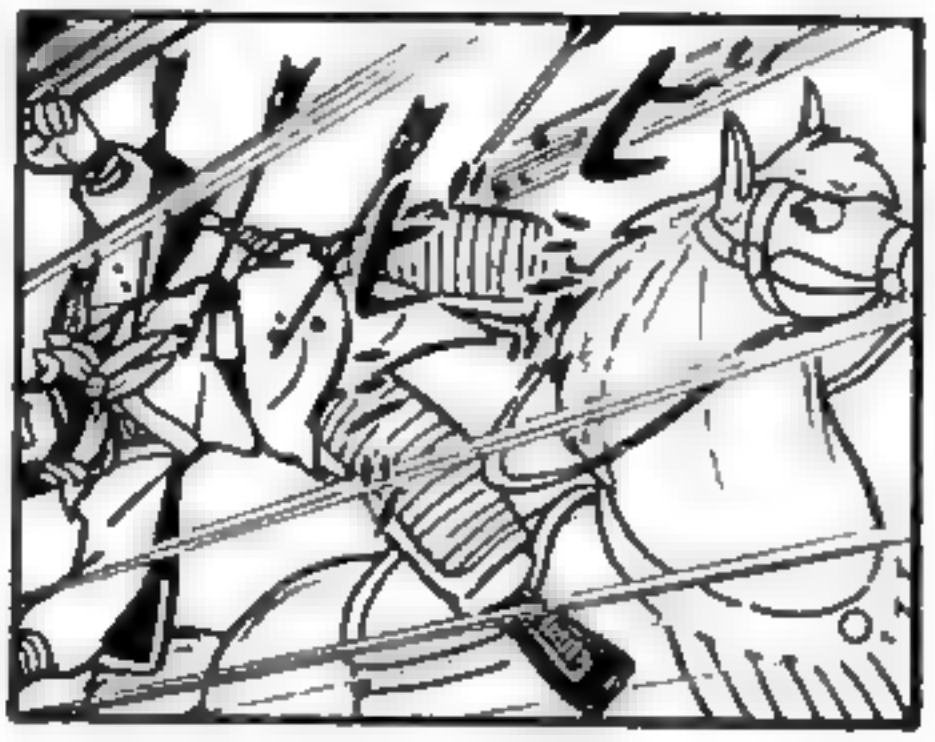
NOW!











RETREAT!

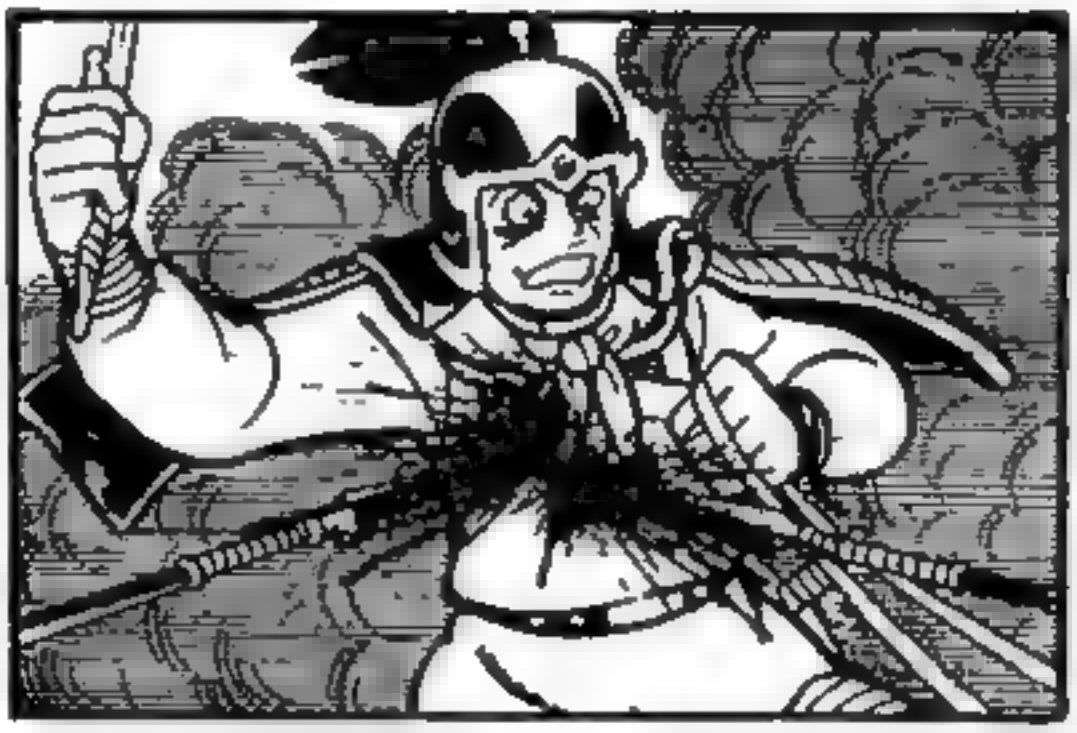
SIR, WE'LL BE WIPED OUT AT THIS RATE!

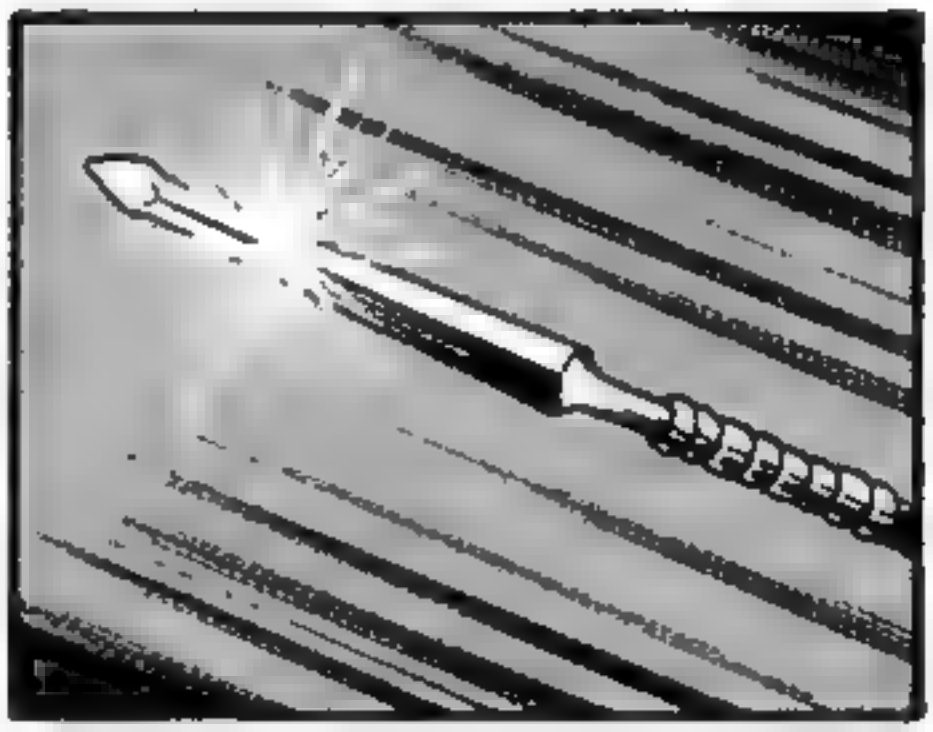
RETREAT!

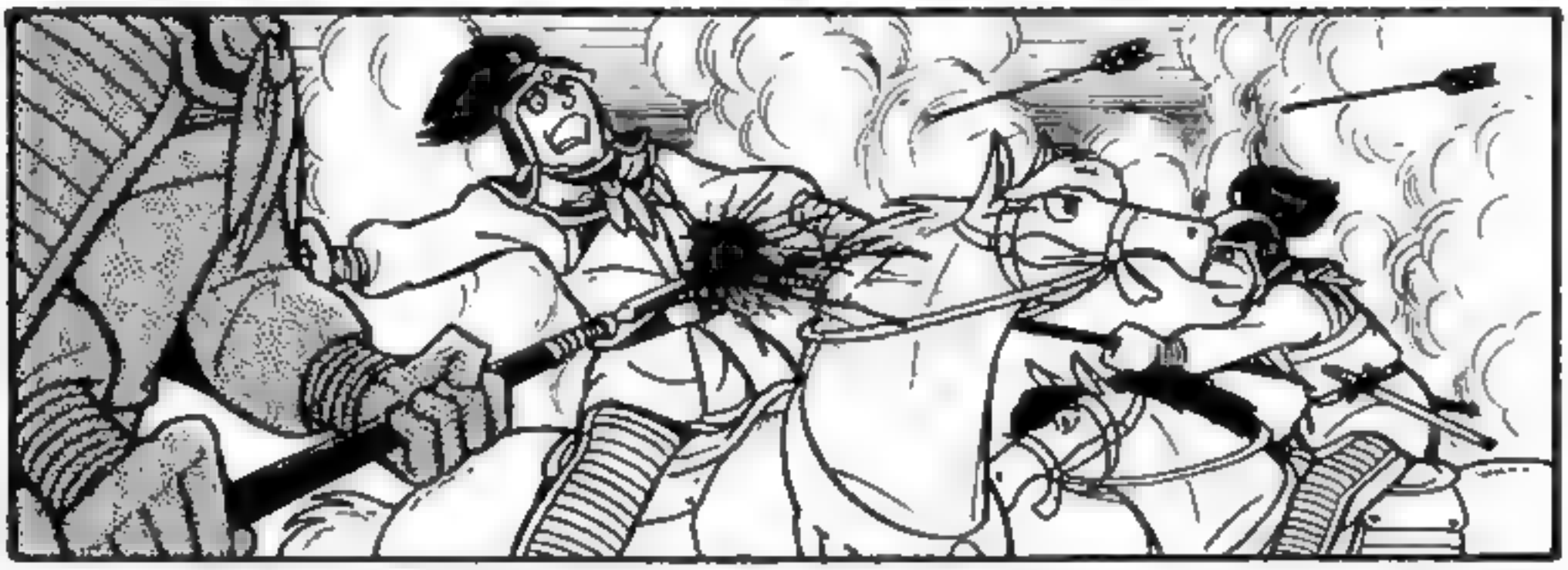
SIR, THE WHITE HORSE CAVALRY HAVE BEEN CRUSHED.

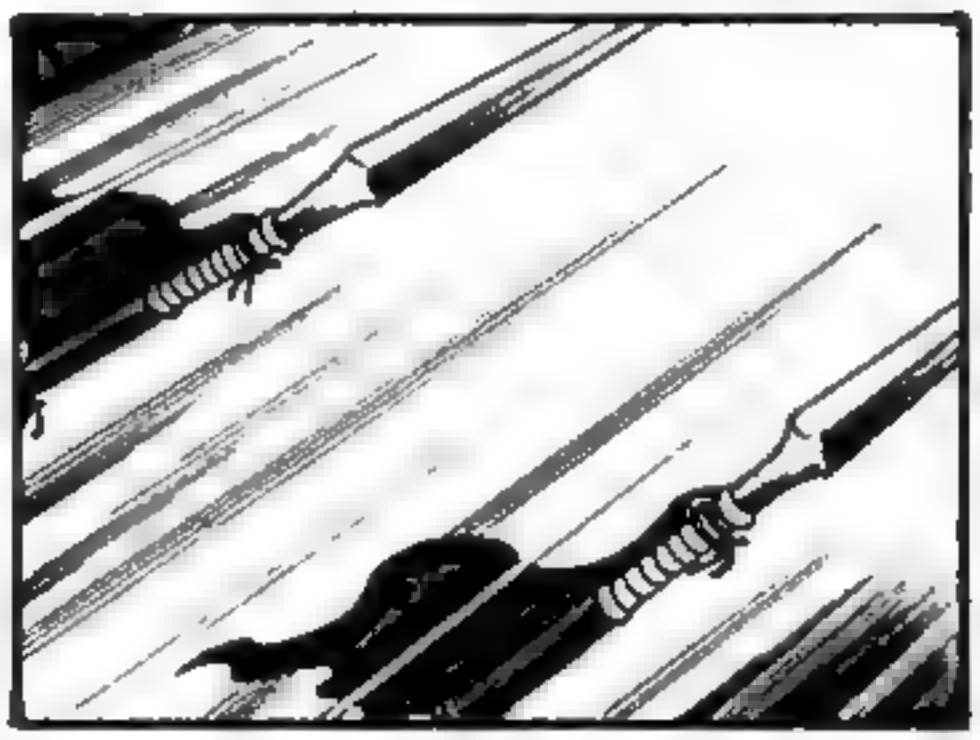
NOW IS THE TIME TO CHARGE AND COMPLETLY ANNHILATE THE ENEMY FORCES!

FLAGS ALL READ YUAN FOR YUAN SHAO







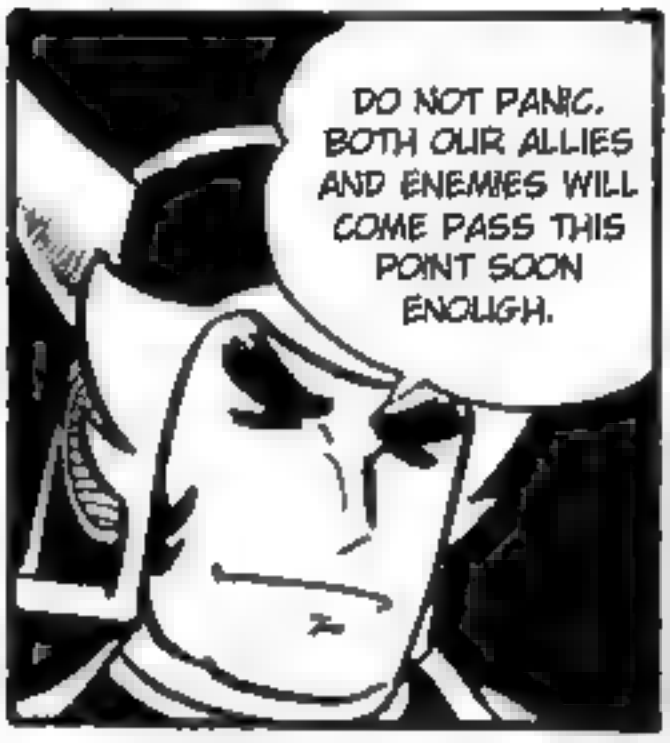


DURING ALL OF THIS, ONE TROOP WAS SILENTLY OBSERVING THE BATTLE

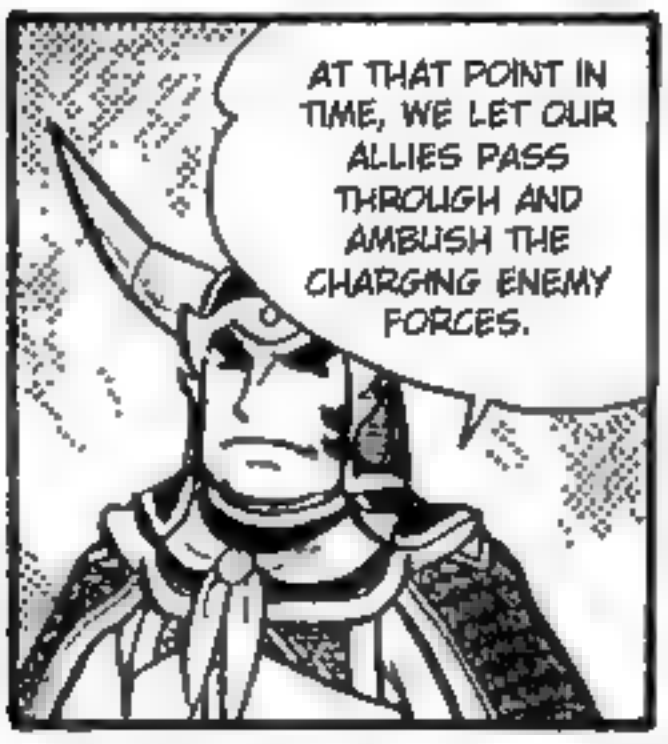
AND HIS 500 MEN

IT WAS ZHAO YUN ZILONG.

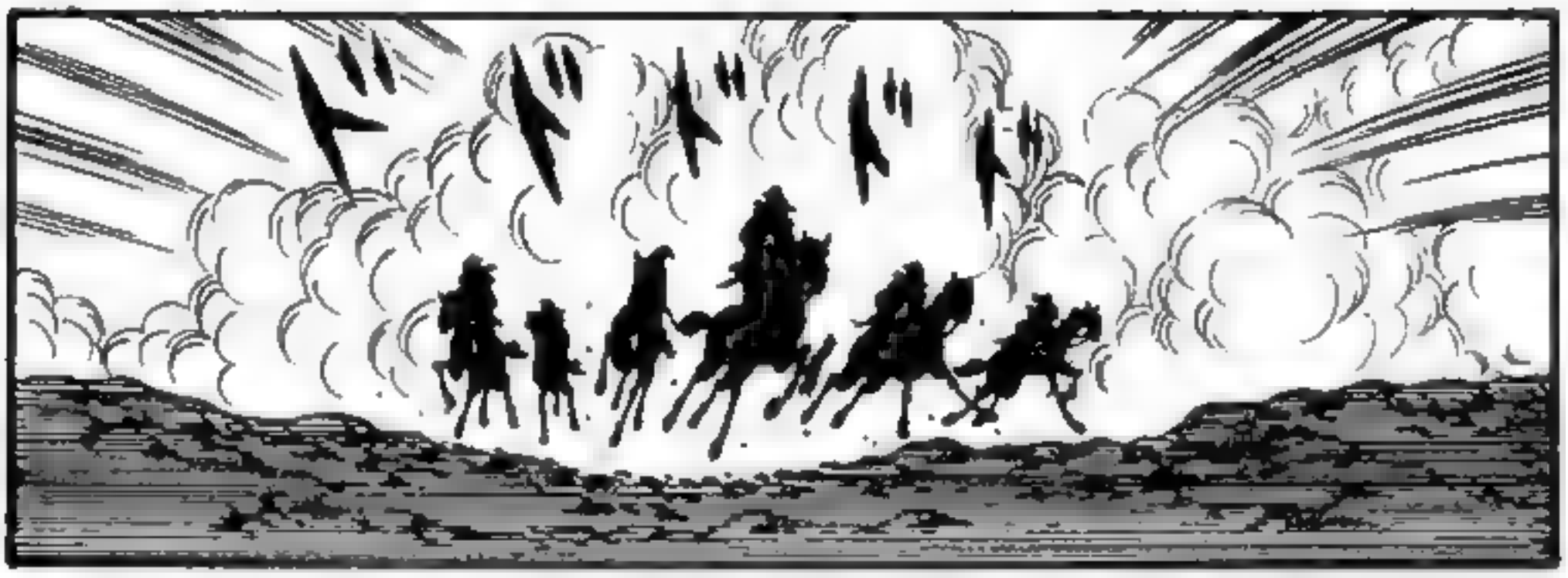
チラッ

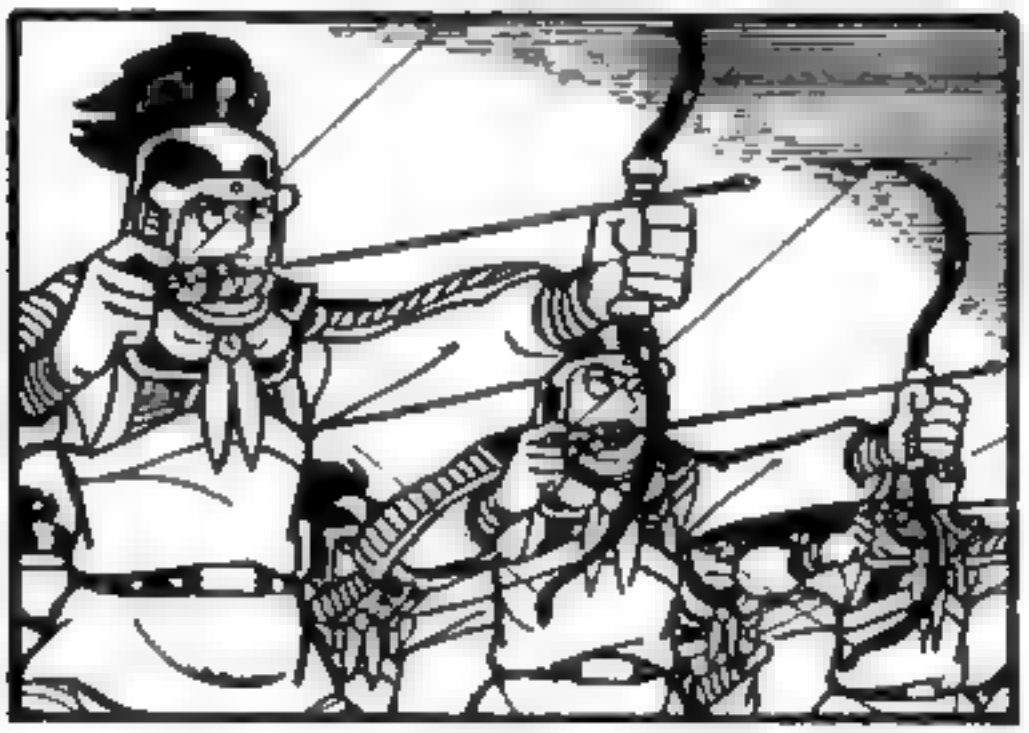

DO NOT PANIC. BOTH OUR ALLIES AND ENEMIES WILL COME PASS THIS POINT SOON ENOUGH.

SIR! AT THIS RATE, OUR ALLIES WILL BE WIPED OUT VERY SOON! WE MUST SPRING INTO ACTION!

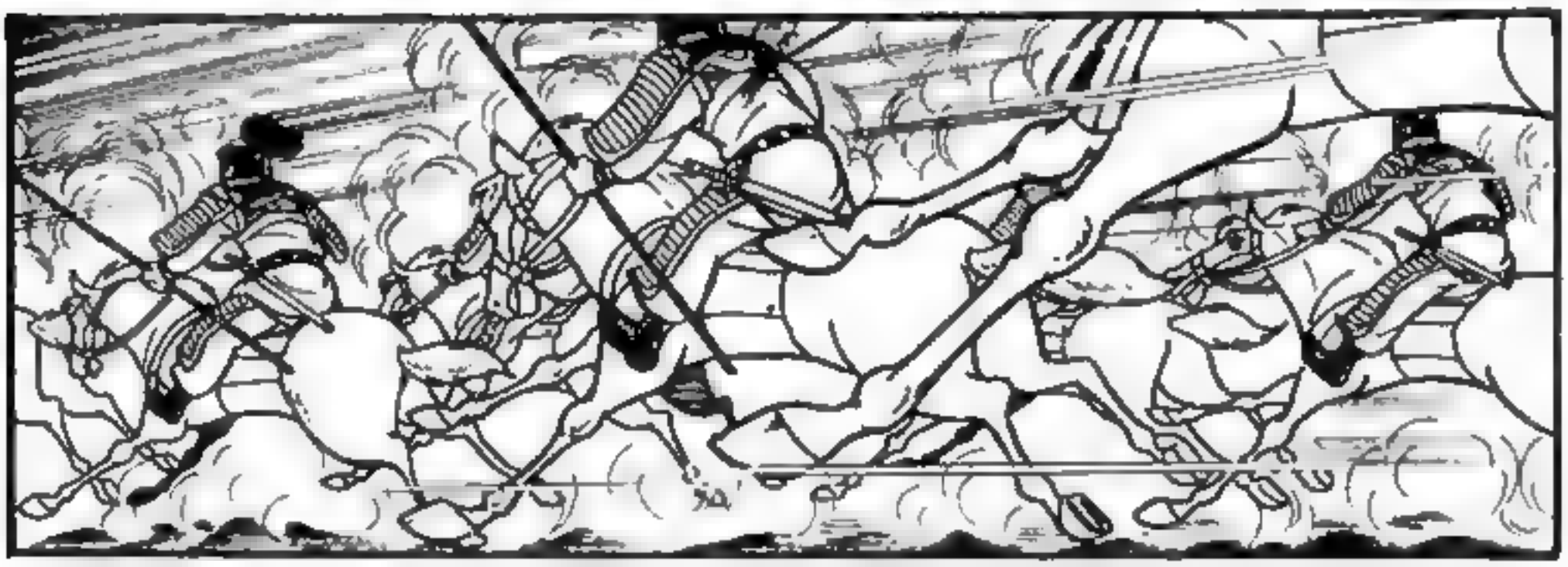

AT THAT POINT IN TIME, WE LET OUR ALLIES PASS THROUGH AND AMBUSH THE CHARGING ENEMY FORCES.

SO WE MUST QUIETLY WAIT UNTIL THEN.



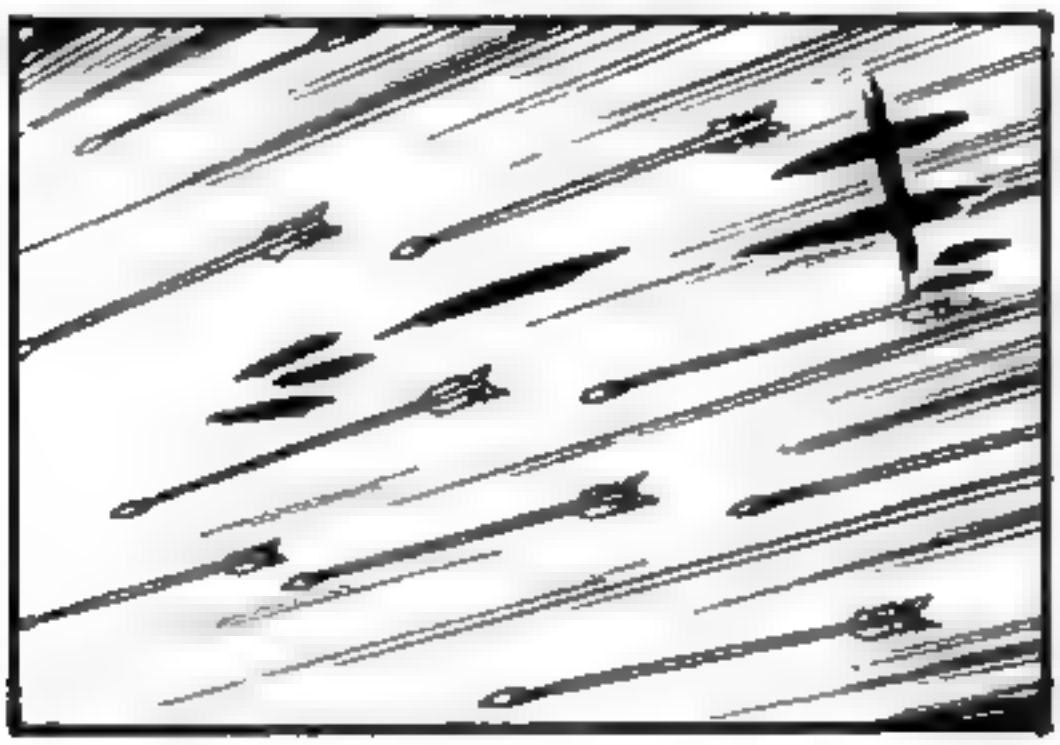


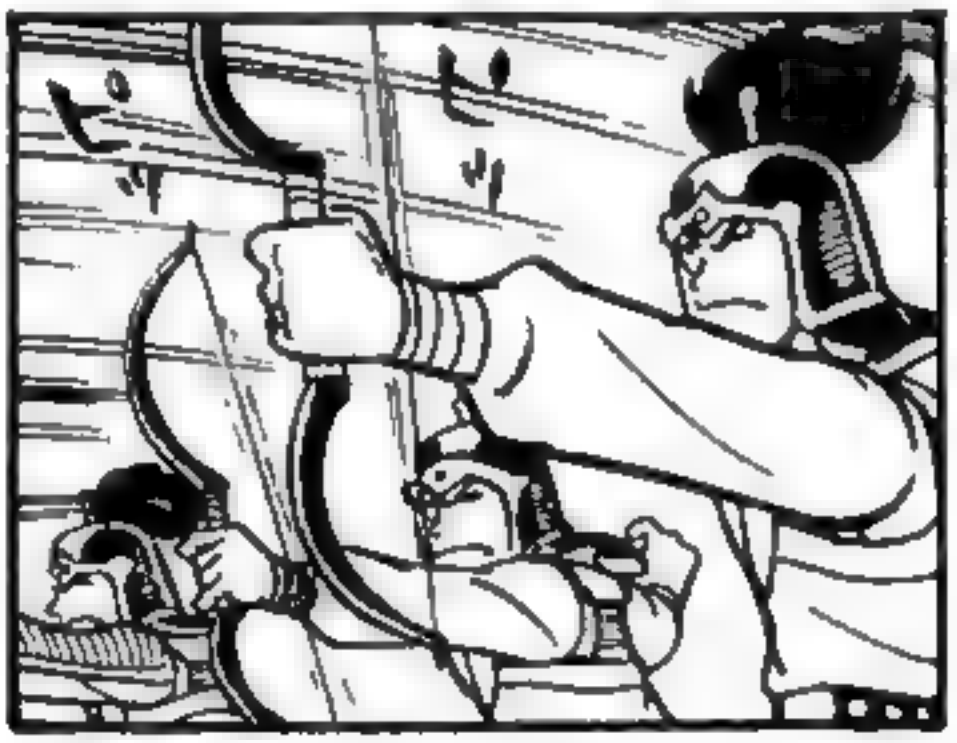
ARCHERS, ARROWS AT THE READY! YOU WILL FIRE AS SOON OUR ALLIES HAVE SAFELY PASSED.

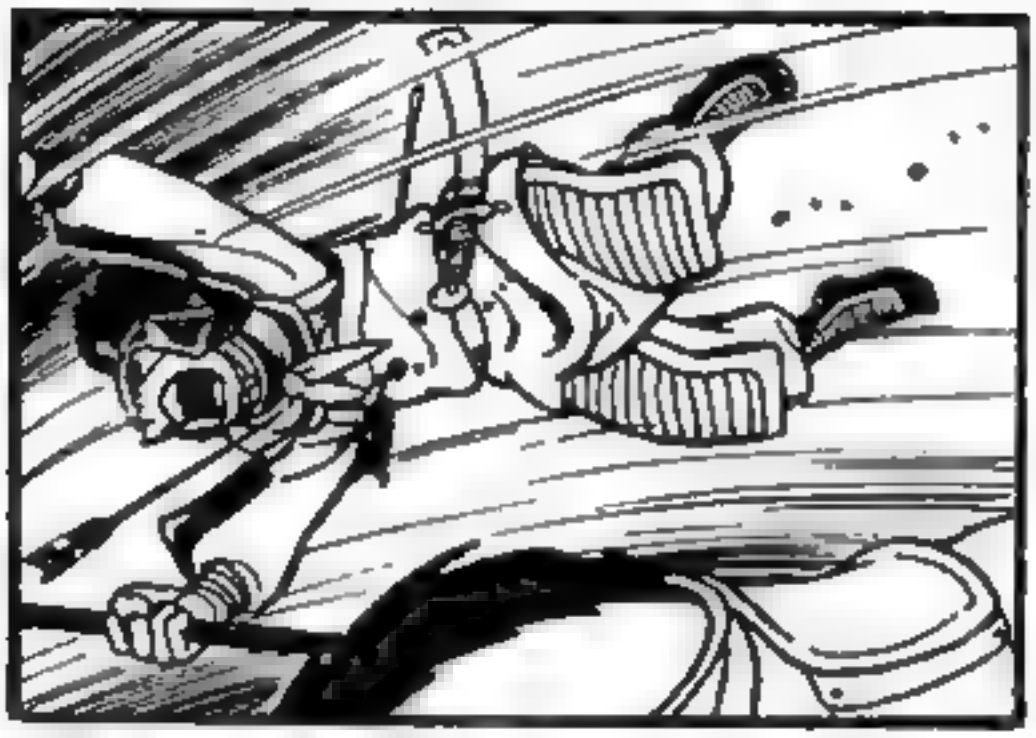


THEY'RE HERE!

FIRE!







NOW
CHARGE!

OHHH!

SIR! ZHAO YUN'S FORCES HAVE STOPPED THE ENEMY'S ADVANCE!

MEN, LET US REGROUP OUR CAVALRY AND ATTACK BACK!

WHAT TREMENDOUS PROWESS HE HAS!

?

HMM?

SIR, OVER THERE!

WE CAME AS FAST AS WE COULD FROM PINGYUAN WHEN WE HEARD THAT SIR WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE.

WHY, IT'S LIU BEI XUANDE!

YES.

GUAN YU, ZHANG FEI.

I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO REPAY YOU.

ZHANG FEI SHALL BE YOUR OPPONENT TODAY!

ALRIGHT, YOU WEAK-LINGS!

ZHANG FEI!?

IT'S GUAN YU!

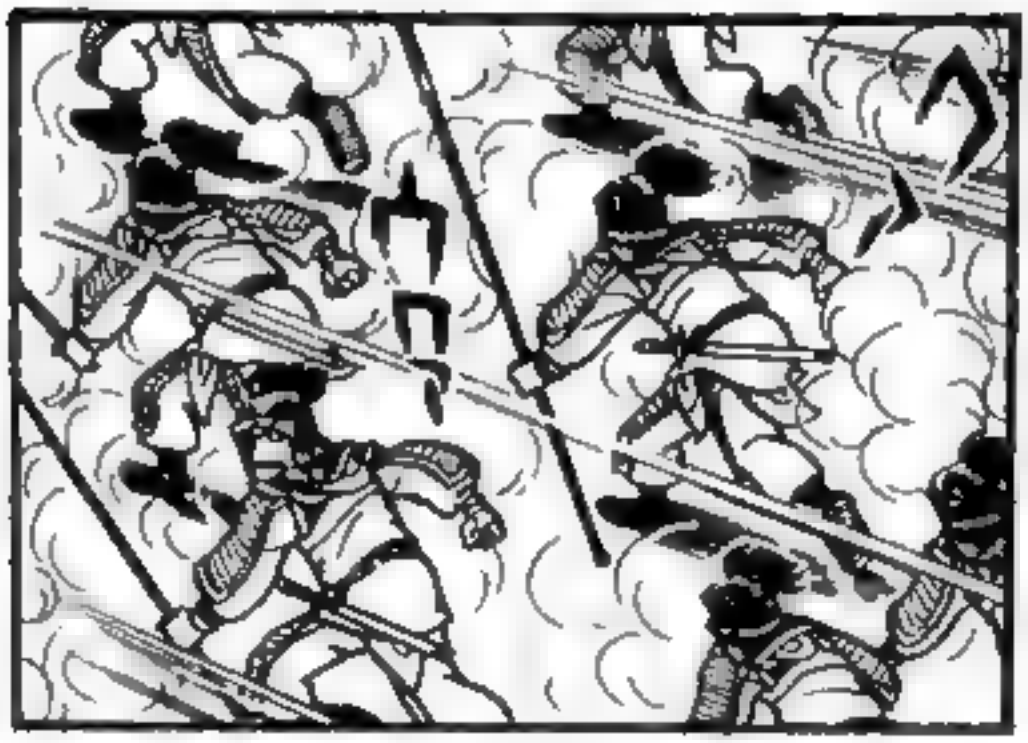
COME! GUAN YU SHALL GLADLY TAKE YOU ALL ON!

I CAN'T LET ZHANG FEI TAKE ALL THE GLORY NOW.

EVEN A HUNDRED OR TWO HUNDRED OF US WON'T BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THOSE TWO!

I SAW THOSE TWO FIGHTING AT HULAO PASS AS WELL!

AGHH! THAT'S ZHANG FEI AND GUAN YU! THE ONES WHO FOUGHT LU BU TO A STANDSTILL!



YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE!
RUN FOR IT!

STOP! WHY ARE YOU COWARDS FLEEING!?

WHAT!?

WHAT, YOU MEAN THOSE TWO BY LIU BEI'S SIDE?

SIR! GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI HAVE APPEARED!

YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'D BE BEST TO PULL BACK FOR NOW!

AGHHHH!

BUT SIR! IF WE LET THIS CHANCE GO, WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO KILL GONGSUN ZAN!

ALLOW ME TO DEAL WITH THEM, SIR.

EVEN GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI AREN'T IMMORTAL GODS.

B-BUT...!

ZHANG FEI, YOUR OPPONENT IS I!

BUT LET'S SEE HOW GOOD YOU REALLY ARE!

WELL, WELL, WELL. IT SEEMS THAT THERE'S AT LEAST ONE MAN WITH A SPINE HERE.

H-HE'S A DEMON!

ACK!

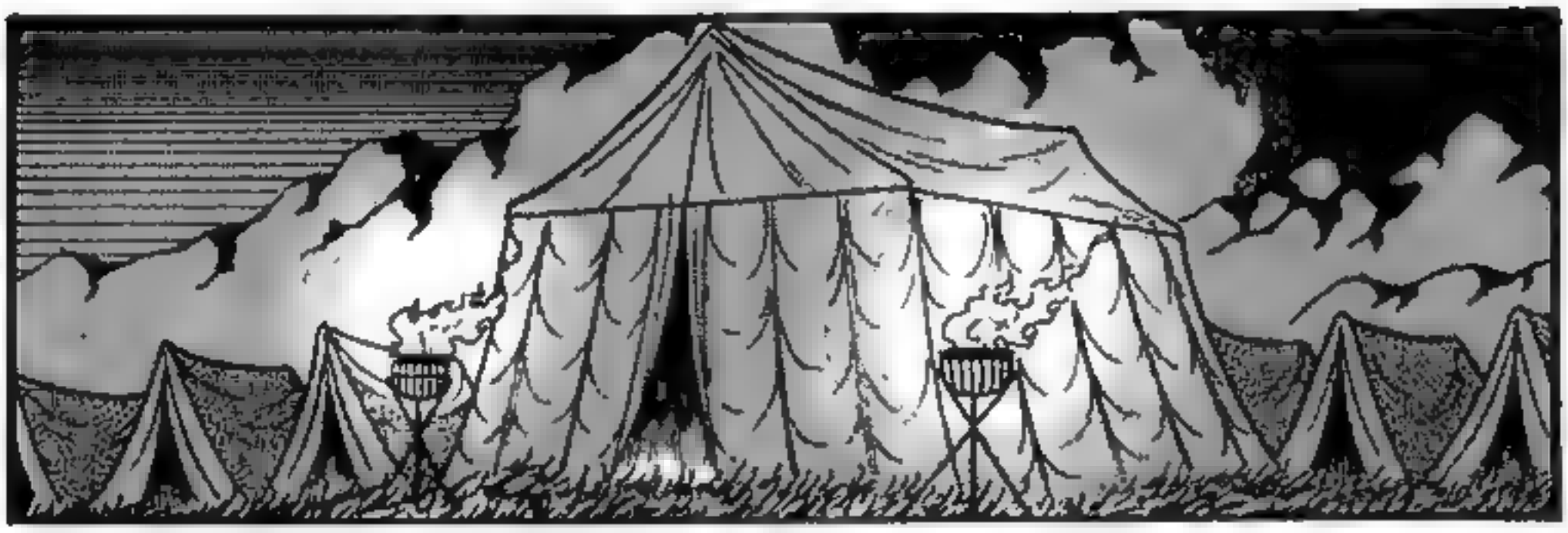
RETREAT!

HMPH. ALL TALK AND NOTHING TO BACK IT UP.

NOW WHO'S NEXT?

WHAT? WHERE'D EVERYONE GO?

RECONCILIATION



AH, OF COURSE. I HAVE HEARD SOME GOOD THINGS ABOUT LIU BEI. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU AS WELL.

I SEE. IT IS A PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE. I AM LIU BEI XUANDE.
THIS MAN ALSO SAVED MY LIFE AND IS CURRENTLY ASSISTING ME AS A MERCENARY.

I HAD HEARD THAT LIU BEI XUANDE HAD TWO SKILLED WARRIORS SERVING HIM. YOU MUST BE THOSE TWO, GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI.

ZHANG FEI.

YES, I AM GUAN YU.

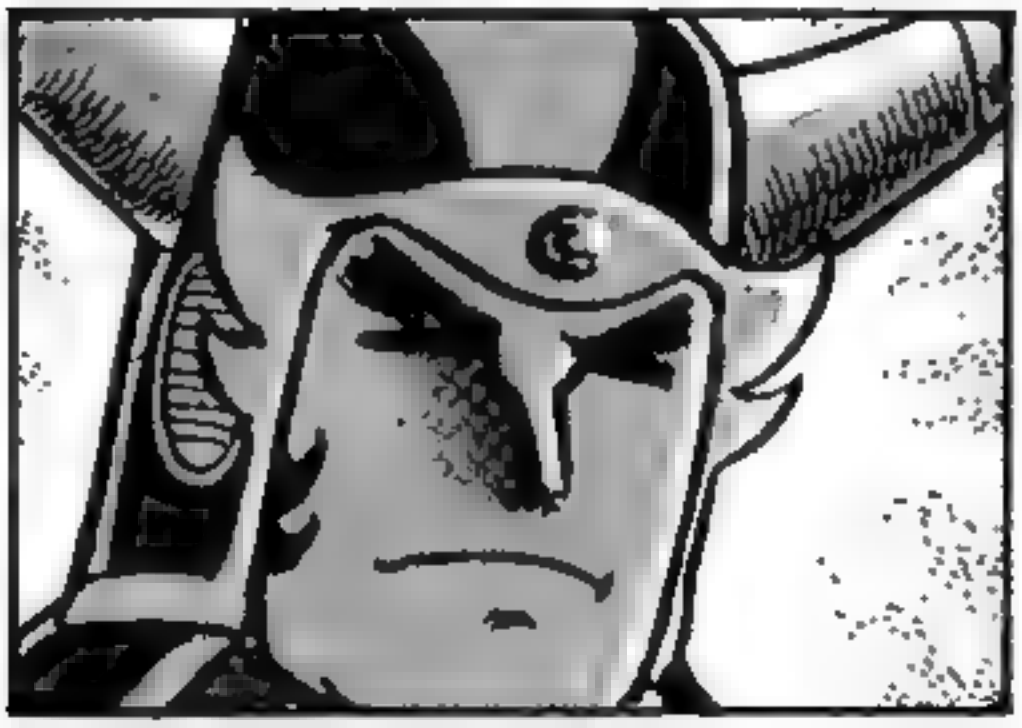
NOW, LET US HAVE A TOAST TO OUR VICTORY TODAY.

WHAT IS, SIR?

BUT IT REALLY IS QUITE UNFORTU-NATE.

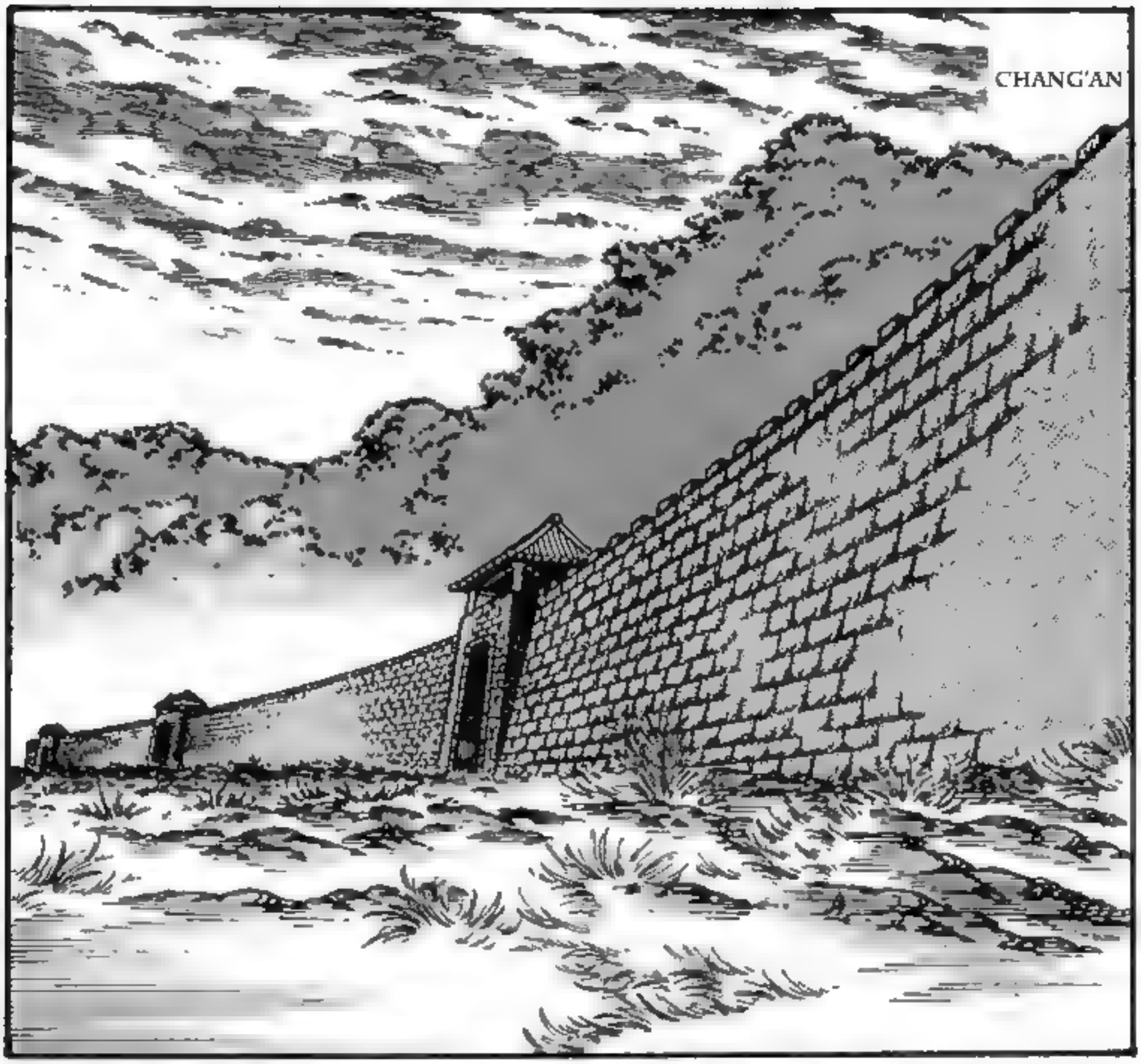
BUT THAT MIGHT BE AN OVERLY GREEDY DESIRE OF MINE.

HOW FORTUNATE AND OVERJOYED I WOULD BE IF I HAD MEN SUCH AS YOU SERVING UNDER ME.



ZHAO ZILONG... I DON'T THINK HE'S YOUR AVERAGE EVERYDAY WARRIOR...

HMM, HE'S A MUCH GREATER MAN THAN I HAD EXPECTED... HE'LL DEFINITELY RISE UP AND MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF ONE DAY...


CHANG'AN

EVER SINCE IT BECAME THE NEW CAPITAL OF HAN, IT HAD TRANSFORMED INTO A GLAMOROUS AND LIVELY CITY BEFITTING OF ITS NEW STATUS

HAVING SEATED HIMSELF AS BOTH THE CHANCELLOR AND SENIOR GRAND TUTOR*, DONG ZHUO ESSENTIALLY RULED AS THE EMPEROR.

CHANC-ELLOR.

*SENIOR GRAND TUTOR: HIGHEST RANKING CIVIL STATUS BELOW EMPEROR

HAS SIR HEARD THAT YUAN SHAO AND GONGSUN ZAN ARE CURRENTLY FIGHTING EACH OTHER AT PAN RIVER?

OH?

WHAT IS IT, LI RU?

I BELIEVE YUAN SHAO IS FARING POORER SO FAR, CHANCELLOR.

AND WHO HAS THE ADVANTAGE SO FAR?

BUT THE BATTLE HAS ALREADY RAGED FOR OVER A MONTH AND BOTH SIDES HAVE LOST COUNTLESS OF MEN.

AND ARE NOW ALMOST TOO EXHAUSTED TO FIGHT.

YUAN SHAO AND GONGSUN ZAN... WHAT PETTY MEN THOSE TWO TURNED OUT TO BE!

TO THINK THAT THOSE MEN WHO ONCE BANDED TOGETHER TO BRING ME DOWN ARE NOW FIGHTING TO THE DEATH...!

I THANK YOU, LI RU, FOR MAKING THIS WINE TASTE BETTER THAN IT DOES ALREADY!

HAHAHA!

AND THEN I'LL BE ONE STEP CLOSER TO RULING OVER ALL OF HAN!

AHAHAHAHA! LET BOTH ARMIES KILL EACH OTHER!

LET ALL THOSE OPPOSE ME DIE!

YUAN SHAO, GONGSUN ZAN! SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN!

HMM!?

CHANCELLOR, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE WISE TO RETHINK THIS OVER.

BUT THAT ALSO MEANS ONE WILL SURVIVE.

IT IS TRUE THAT ONE MAN WILL DIE AS THE RESULT OF THIS BATTLE.

INSTEAD OF ALLOWING THAT TO HAPPEN, HOW ABOUT IF SIR ASKS THEM TO RECONCILE?

AND THE ONE WHO SURVIVED WILL EVENTUALLY REASSEMBLE HIS FORCES AND GATHER OTHER MEN TO COME AND DEPOSE SIR.

WHAT!?

WE MUST USE THIS CHANCE TO CAUSE THEM TO BE INDEBTED TO SIR.

YOU WANT ME TO LET TWO ENEMIES OF MINE RECONCILE WITH EACH OTHER!?

AND OF COURSE, THEY WILL BECOME INDEBTED TOWARDS SIR, WHO WAS THE ONE WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE.

SINCE BOTH SIDES ARE BATTERED AND EXHAUSTED, THEY WOULD BE GLAD TO ACCEPT THE EMPEROR'S ORDER FOR RECONCILIATION.

HMM...

IN OTHER WORDS, THIS WILL BE THE CHANCE TO TAME SIR'S ENEMIES.

YES, CHANCELLOR.

VERY WELL, I'LL LET YOU TAKE CARE OF IT THEN.

I SEE... AS THE SAYING GOES, EVEN A WILD DOG WILL RECOGNIZE ITS MASTER AFTER BEING FED FOR 3 DAYS.

IDENTIFY YOUR-SELVES!

HALT!

I AM AN IMPERIAL MESSEN-GER SENT BY THE EMPEROR HIMSELF TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO GONGSUN ZAN.

P-PLEASE WAIT JUST A MOMENT, SIR...

AN IMP-ERIAL MESSEN-GER!?

WHAT!?

GENERAL, AN IMPERIAL MESSEN-GER SENT BY THE EMPEROR HAS JUST ARRIVED.

YES, SIR.

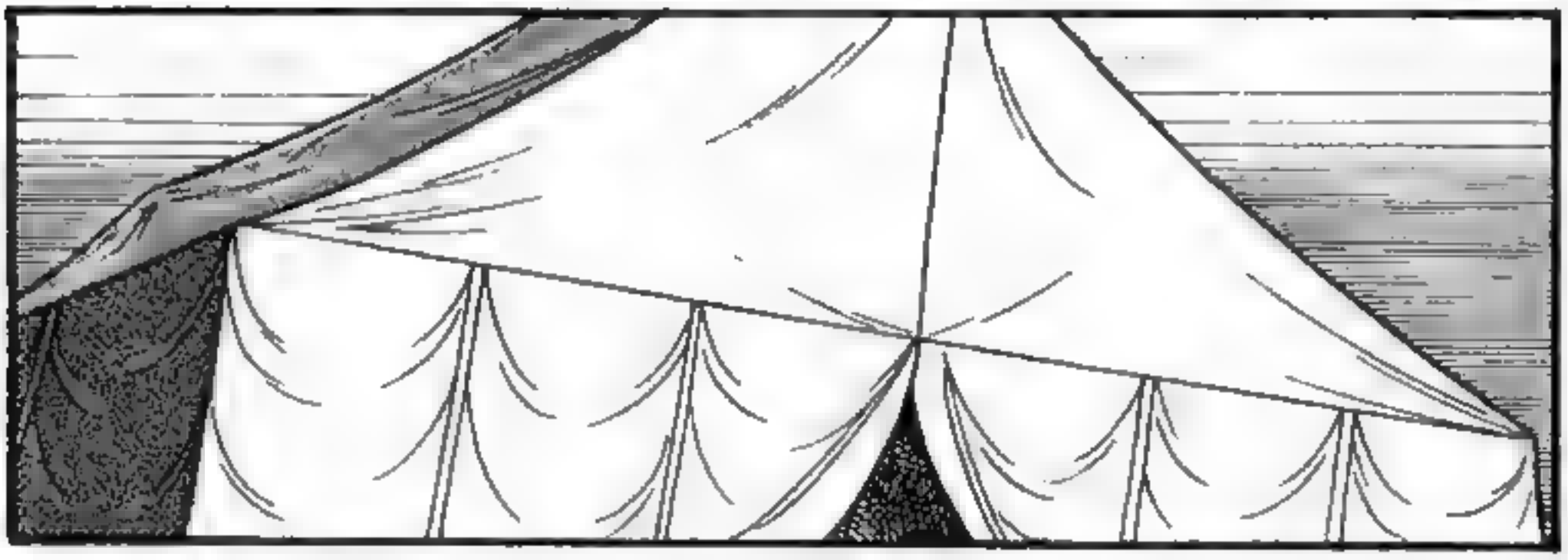
WELL, ESCORT HIM HERE KINDLY RIGHT AWAY.

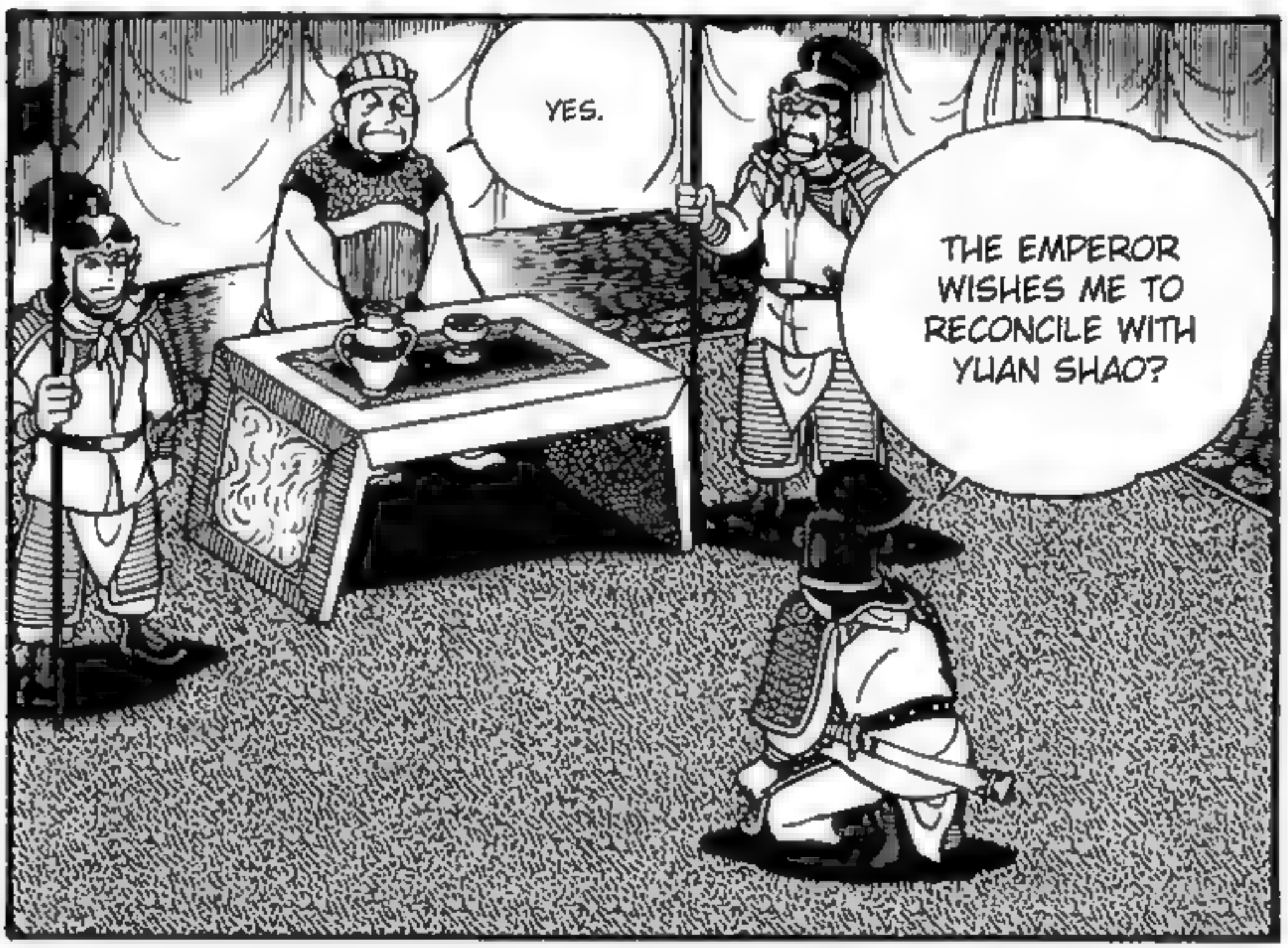
YES, SIR.

AN IMPERIAL MESSENGER, YOU SAY?

I HAVE NO IDEA...

I WONDER WHAT THE MESSAGE WILL BE ABOUT?




YES.
THE EMPEROR WISHES ME TO RECONCILE WITH YUAN SHAO?

I WOULD NOT MIND BUT I'M AFRAID I DO NOT KNOW HOW YUAN SHAO WOULD REACT TO THIS...

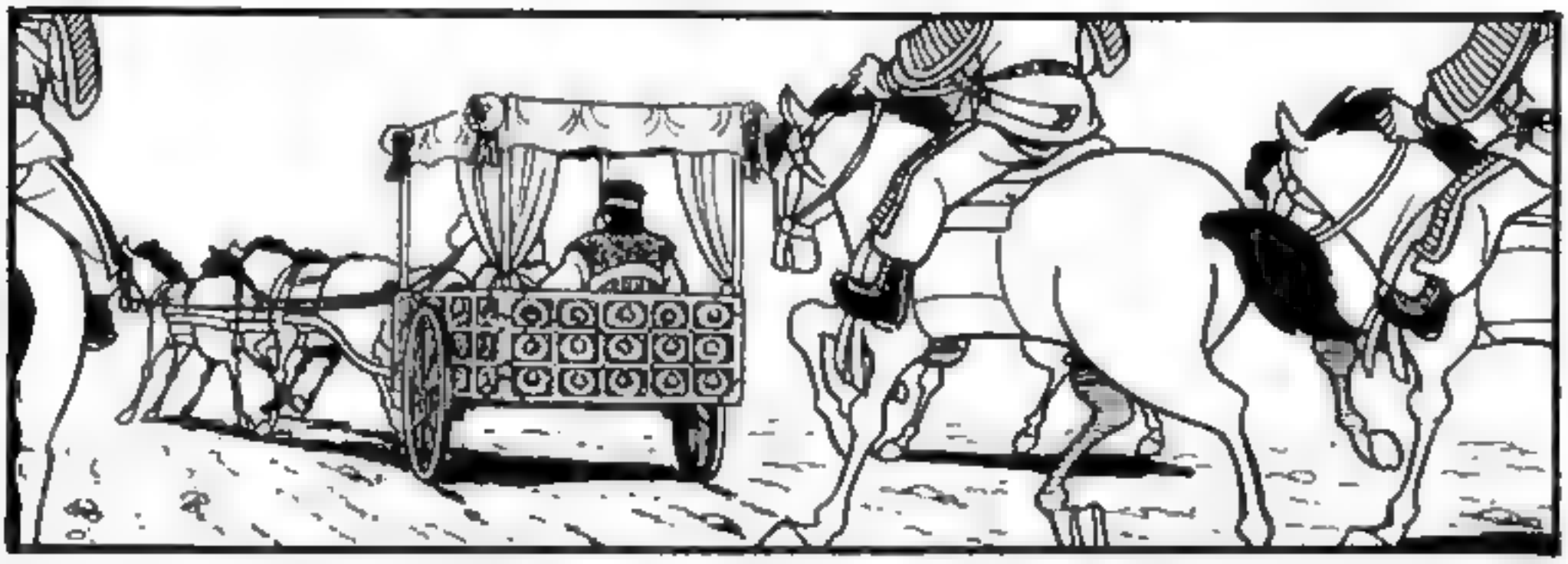
THE EMPEROR IS PAINED TO HEAR TWO RETAINERS OF HIS FIGHTING A BLOODY BATTLE AND WISHES YOU TWO TO STOP.

I KINDLY THANK BOTH SIR AND THE EMPEROR.

YOU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT THAT FOR I SHALL GO PER-SUADE HIM.

GOOD. I'M SURE HIS HIGHNESS WILL SURELY BE PLEASED.

THEN I SHALL LEAVE TO TALK WITH YUAN SHAO.



BUT WILL YUAN SHAO REALLY AGREE TO THE DEAL AS WELL?

IT SEEMS THE BATTLE WILL COME TO AN END NOW.

HE WILL GLADLY ACCEPT.

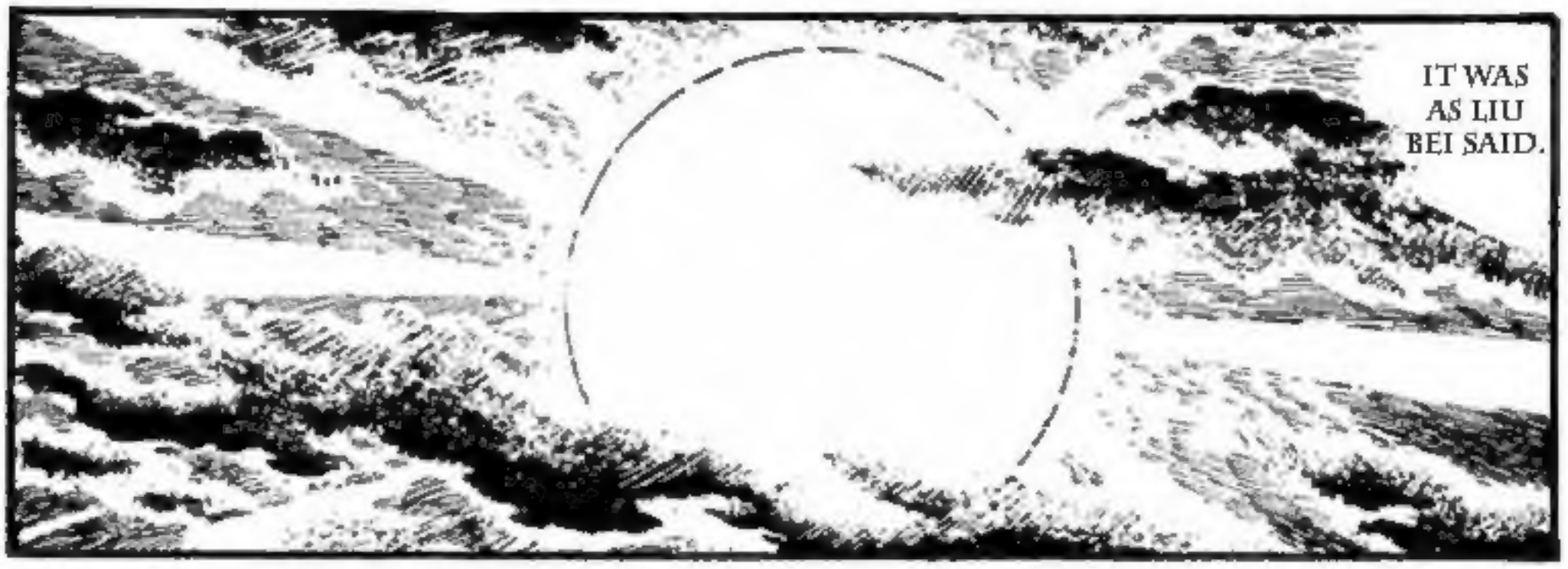
JUST TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU.

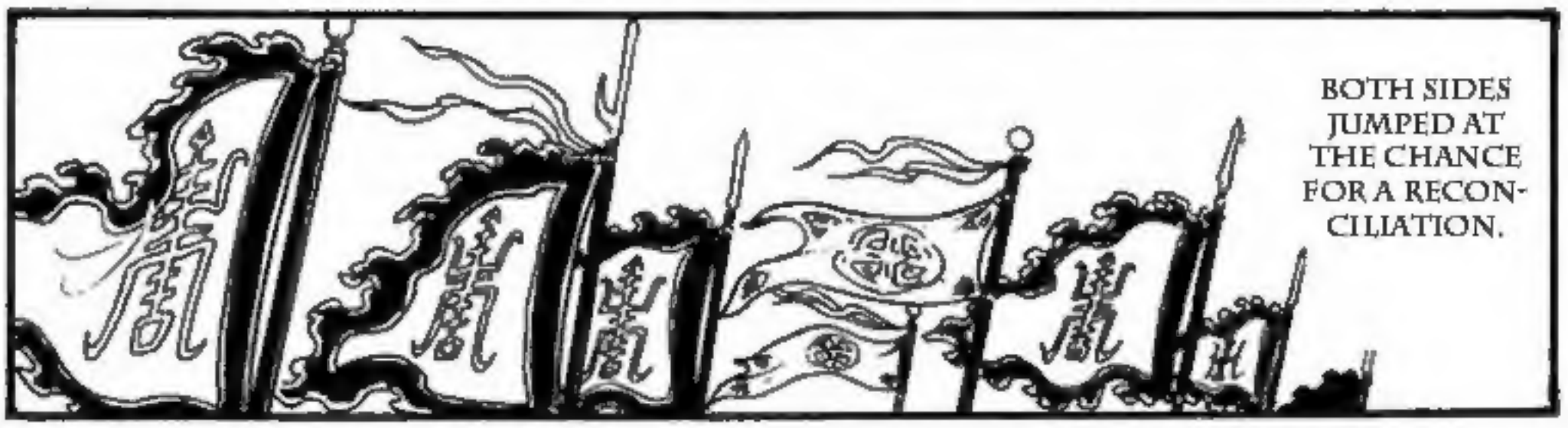
THE CASUALTIES ARE ENDLESS AND THE SURVIVING SOLDIERS ARE ALL WEARY AND TIRED.

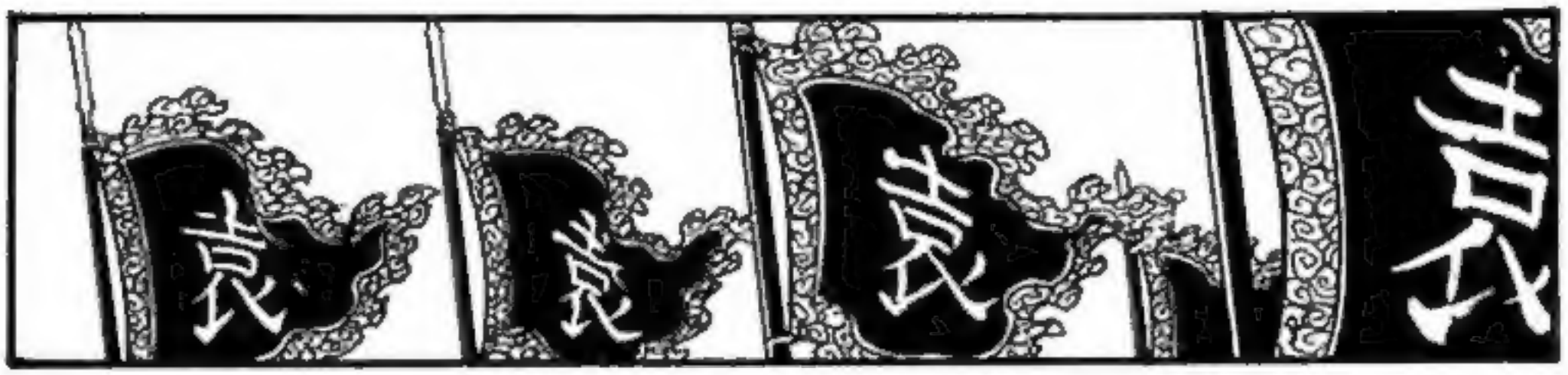
HMPH. JUST ONE MORE PUSH AND WE WOULD'VE WON THE BATTLE...!

HE WILL DEFINITELY JUMP AT THE CHANCE FOR A RECONCILIATION.

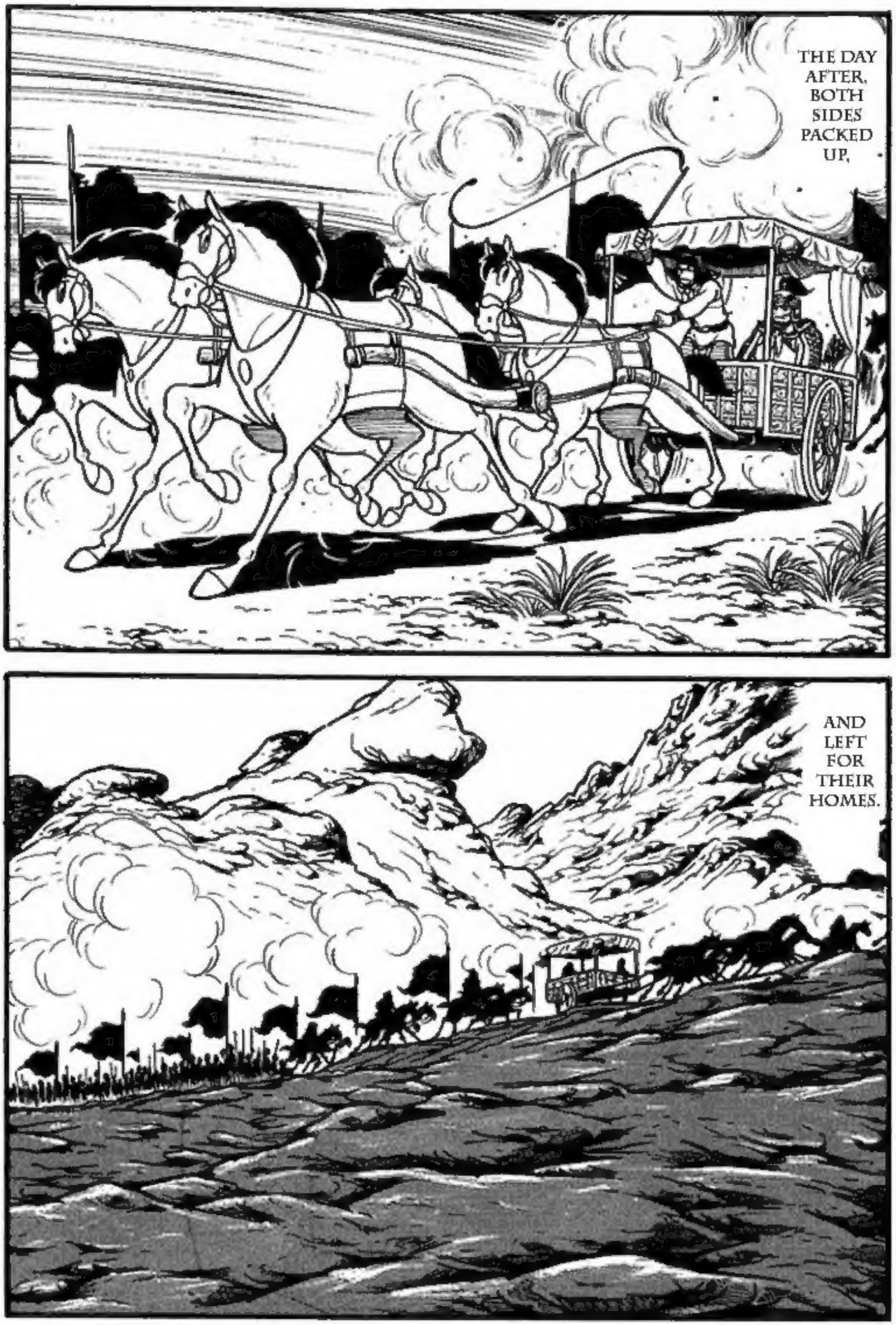
YUAN'S SHAO'S FORCES ARE IN WORSE SHAPE THAN THIS.


IT WAS AS LIU BEI SAID.


BOTH SIDES JUMPED AT THE CHANCE FOR A RECONCILIATION.



THE TWO GENERALS SHARED A GLASS OF WINE AND FORMALLY CALLED A TRUCE.



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